



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES TO BRIDGE THE  
GAP BETWEEN POLICE OFFICER LINE OF DUTY  
DEATHS AND AGENCY RESILIENCY**

by

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December 2015

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN POLICE  
OFFICER LINE OF DUTY DEATHS AND AGENCY RESILIENCY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Law enforcement agencies in the United States experience line of duty deaths on a regular basis, but unfortunately too many agencies do not have a line of duty death policy. This thesis focuses on locating agencies with viable and effective line of duty death policies to assist other agencies in policy implementation. The research found agencies with proactive policies to help guide leadership and subordinate personnel through the many aspects of such tragic events. For comparative analysis, five law enforcement agencies and three fire departments with varying degrees of line of duty death experience were selected. This research examined formal and informal, as well as written and unwritten, line of duty death policies in use by law enforcement agencies and fire departments across the United States and identified viable examples of policies and procedures. This thesis recommends that the St. Petersburg Police Department and other law enforcement agencies without a line of duty death policy take steps to create and implement a policy to enhance resiliency, readiness, and effectiveness.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

APCA	American Police Chaplains Association
APD	Amtrak Police Department
CARE	Compassionate Assistance with Care and Empathy
CEO	chief executive officer
CFD	Charlotte Fire Department
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CISD	critical incident stress debriefing
CISM	critical incident stress management
COPS	Concerns of Police Survivors
CSFD	Colorado Springs Fire Department
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EDL	Emergency Department Liaison
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
ICS	incident command
KCPD	Kansas City Police Department
LBFD	Long Beach Fire Department
LEO	law enforcement officer
LODD	line of duty death
LODK	line of duty killing
NLEOMF	National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund
NPD	Norman Police Department
NYPD	New York Police Department
OIC	officer in charge
PGM	planning group manager
POPPA	Police Organization Providing Peer Assistance
PSP	peer support program
PSU	peer support unit
SOP	survivor outreach program
SPD	Stockton Police Department

SPPD	St. Petersburg Police Department
U.S.C.	United States Code
VSP	Virginia State Police
WCPR	West Coast Post-trauma Retreat

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Law enforcement officer line of duty deaths are an unfortunate part of contemporary society. The untimely death of an officer killed in the line of duty affects family, coworkers, friends, and even extends into the community. Many law enforcement agencies around the nation have effective and thorough line of duty death policies, while others agencies have weak or nonexistent policies.

A comparative analysis of existing line of duty death policies for various law enforcement agencies and fire departments was conducted to locate established policies and evaluate their usefulness. Of the agencies examined, some have minimal policies, while others have extensive line of duty death policies regardless of the number of line of duty deaths experienced. Research extended beyond the agencies to find other available resources to assist survivors after a line of duty death. Of the agencies studied, many used peer counseling, chaplain programs, and retreats to provide survivors with the ability to cope with line of duty deaths. The most simplistic steps to facilitate the healing process are when agencies have specified what they consider a line of duty death, created a defined and realistic notification process, established logistics for funeral planning, and instituted a comprehensive emotional care plan for the survivors.

Experiencing a line of duty death often causes a great deal of stress for the survivors. Having a policy in place to detail the steps required after such an event can aid in stress reduction. The lack of proactive thinking by agencies leads to reactive behavior by those affected, which has shown to be ineffective.

This thesis recommends that all law enforcement agencies institute a line of duty death policy. The Concerns of Police Survivors organization has established a large conduit of information and resources to assist agencies with establishing line of duty death policies. In addition, there is a wealth of information to be gleaned from agencies that have experienced line of duty

deaths and have written policies. This thesis identifies these viable line of duty death policies and makes recommendations for implementation in agencies without such policies.

This thesis recommends that agencies research and incorporate what is already available and create a written line of duty death policy. The recommendations of this thesis focus on the needs of the St. Petersburg Police Department; however, any agency can modify these recommendations accordingly. The areas of focus in any policy should include defining line of duty deaths and job classifications, death notifications, accurate emergency contact information, logistics, and survivor support. When determining what parts of the policy are needed, overlooking the vital aspect of proper notifications can be detrimental. While each category is important to the overall policy and agency resiliency, it is imperative that agencies recognize which policies are vital to their organization.

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Thank you all for helping me cross this finish line.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Taking an oath to protect and serve is a calling. It is a selfless act that leads to a life of giving and sacrifice. Tragically, the profession of law enforcement has become less respected by many, and those who have chosen this career have become the target of violent acts. The death of an officer can be accidental, intentional, or health related. The effect this has on an agency has a lasting impact, and, the cause of death can make the impact greater. A line of duty death (LODD) pertains to an officer who dies while performing his or her duties. A line of duty killing (LODK) is met with feelings that are often considerably different from a LODD. In the case of a LODK, those officers left behind often feel cheated because they have lost a coworker and friend in a senseless and often violent act. They also feel personally more vulnerable and under attack. How officers react to LODK depends to some extent on how their community responds, and how much community support they feel they have.

Some of the following statistics are based on the smaller number of officers feloniously or violently killed in the line of duty while some statistics will be based on the all-encompassing line of duty death numbers. The purpose of this writing is to focus on what is in place to help survivors cope with line of duty death, no matter the cause. However, it should be noted that coping mechanisms may need to vary depending on whether survivors are coping with a line of duty death or violent death.

From January 1 through August 7, 2015, there have been 73 line of duty deaths in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) was founded in 1984 as a foundation to honor and remember the sacrifices made by the fallen and inspire citizens to value law enforcement. They define a “line of duty death” as “any action which an officer is obligated or authorized by law, rule, regulation or written condition of employment service to

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<sup>1</sup> “Law Enforcement Facts,” National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, accessed August 7, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/facts/enforcement/>.

perform, or for which the officer is compensated by the public agency he or she serves, including actions taken against the officer.”<sup>2</sup>

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund defines line of duty killing as a law enforcement officer who:

has died as a direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty. This includes victim law enforcement officers who, while in an off-duty capacity, act in response to a law violation. It also includes victim law enforcement officers who, while in an off-duty capacity, are en route to or from a specific emergency or responding to a particular request for assistance; or the officer is, as required or authorized by law or condition of employment, driving his or her employer's vehicle to or from work; or when the officer is, as required by law or condition of employment, driving his or her own personal vehicle at work and is killed while en route to or from work.<sup>3</sup>

Statistics released in early 2015:

by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] show that 51 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty in 2014. This is an increase of almost 89 percent when compared to the 27 officers killed in 2013.”<sup>4</sup>

Also according to the FBI, “It is important to note that, for the period of 1980 through 2014, the lowest number posted was for 2013; 2014 is being compared to a 35 year low.”<sup>5</sup>

The number of officer line of duty deaths, 126, is higher than the number of line of duty killings, 51. According to NLEOMF reports, “126 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty in 2014.”<sup>6</sup> Over 20,000 law enforcement officers

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<sup>2</sup> National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, *Criteria for Inclusion on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial* (Washington, DC: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “FBI Releases 2014 Preliminary Statistics for Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty,” FBI National Press Office, last modified May 11, 2014, accessed August 10, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-2014-preliminary-statistics-for-law-enforcement-officers-killed-in-the-line-of-duty>.

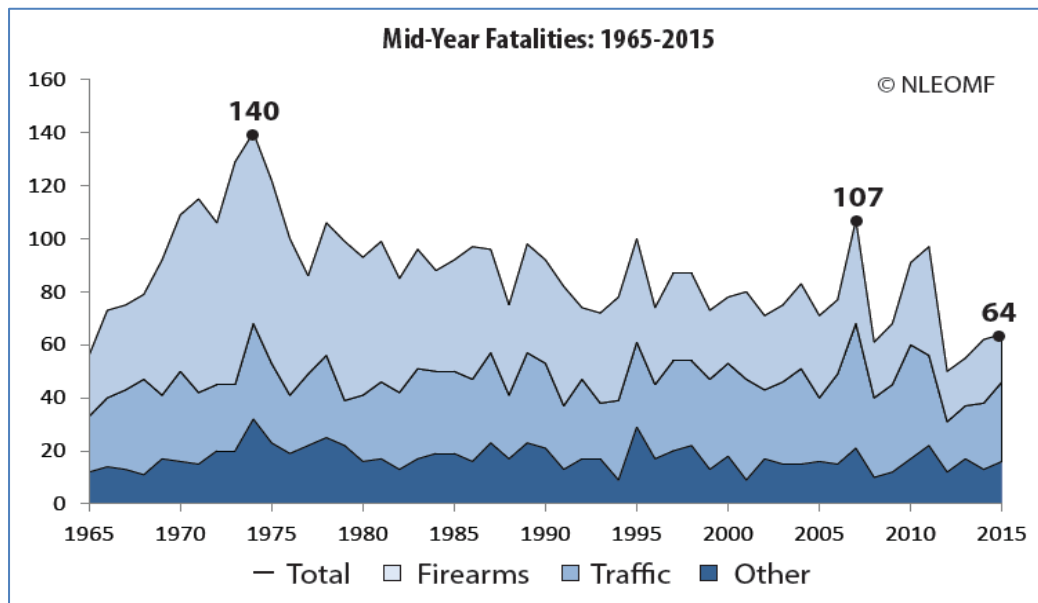
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Law Enforcement Facts,” National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.



have died in the line of duty since the first recorded police death in 1791.<sup>7</sup> From 2004 to 2014, there were 1,466 officers who died in the line of duty, which averages one officer every 60 hours or 146 per year.<sup>8</sup> Figure 1 shows the number of officers killed in the line of duty from 1965 through the first half of 2015.

Figure 1. Line of Duty Deaths by Year and Category



Source: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, *2015 Mid-year Law Enforcement Officers Fatalities Report* (Washington, DC: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2015).

During the 1920s and 1930s, the number of line of duty deaths was significantly higher than recent statistics are. Law enforcement has experienced years with a high number of deaths; 1930 marks the year of more officers killed than any other year, with 301.<sup>9</sup> In the 1920s—law enforcement's deadliest decade—there were an average of 241 officers killed each year, 2,417 in total. According to NLEOMF, "The deadliest day in law enforcement history was

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Law Enforcement Facts," National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

September 11, 2001, when 72 officers were killed while responding to the terrorist attack on America.”<sup>10</sup>

The NLEOMF has kept track of statistics related to officer deaths. It has recorded that Texas has experienced more line of duty deaths than any other state with 1,695 from 1837 through 2015. In contrast, between 1900 and 2003, Vermont has experienced the fewest line of duty deaths with 22. In addition, New York City has lost the most officers in the line of duty, 701 within a 124-year-time span from 1891 to 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Law enforcement line of duty deaths impact the individuals at the agency suffering the loss, the family members of those killed and the community as a whole. The number of line of duty deaths is tragic, and there appears to be no end in sight. There also is no reason to believe it will significantly decrease. Therefore, it stands to reason that it is in the best interest of each law enforcement agency to prepare for the inevitable line of duty death.

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Craig W. Floyd declared:

With the increasing number of ambush-style attacks against our officers, I am deeply concerned that a growing anti-government sentiment in America is influencing weak-minded individuals to launch violent assaults against the men and women working to enforce our laws and keep our nation safe.<sup>12</sup>

In 2014, there was a 56 percent increase in the number of officers killed by firearms nationwide, compared to 2013.<sup>13</sup> The number rose from 32 in 2013 to 50 in 2014, and ambushes were the number one cause of felonious deaths for the fifth consecutive year. There were 15 officers killed nationwide in ambush

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “126 Law Enforcement Officer Fatalities Nationwide in 2014” [press release], National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, December 30, 2014, accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.nleomf.org/newsroom/news-releases/eoy-report-2014.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

style attacks in 2014, which matched the 2012 number—the highest number since 1995.<sup>14</sup>

## **A. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Law enforcement agencies in the United States experience line of duty deaths on a regular basis. There are many agencies, with varying degrees of success, that have proactively implemented policies to help guide leadership and subordinate personnel through the process and coordination of such tragic events. In many instances, such law enforcement agencies have expanded their support system for their employees to include the implementation of effective employee assistance programs (EAPs), reliable pastoral or chaplaincy programs, and peer support programs.

In this thesis, the policies pertaining to line of duty deaths for five law enforcement agencies and three fire departments are analyzed in subsequent chapters to find similarities, differences, and effective practices. Both professions experience line of duty deaths and have policies that overlap in scope and purpose. The agencies selected represent local, state and federally funded entities of varying size with a wide range of line of duty death experiences. The agency of focus is the St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD) in St. Petersburg, Florida. This agency was selected because SPPD does not have clear and effective policies, procedures, and/or programs in place to assist employees in the event a police officer is killed in the line of duty. One barrier to this type of policy implementation may be the negative connotations associated with the strong feelings and emotions, which are often ignored or brushed aside, that accompany each of these tragic events. There are many areas within this topic that warrant graduate-level research to bring about change and establish effective procedures to destigmatize the need for healing within the law enforcement community and assist in working through difficult times following a line of duty death.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## **B. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The focus of this research is locating and implementing proven coping strategies to help officers and agencies become more resilient when facing a line of duty death. The desire is not to directly examine how to decrease line of duty deaths, but to help indirectly decrease LODD because agencies that cope better will in the longer term be able to adopt policies to decrease line of duty deaths. What new policies can law enforcement agencies implement to become more resilient, better maintain a sense of readiness, and more effectively manage the short-term and long-term impacts of line of duty deaths? This topic is important to research as many police departments are detrimentally impacted by line of duty deaths and at times struggle with the inability to help those left behind to move forward constructively. Furthermore, in today's environment, it is likely that line of duty deaths among police officers will continue and possibly increase nationwide.

## **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The focus of this research is to demonstrate the necessity for law enforcement agencies having adequate, effective, and practical framework in place to provide support for officers and families that are affected by a LODD. Law enforcement officers are first responders; therefore, it is imperative that they are physically as well as mentally capable of responding to whatever circumstances with which they are confronted. It is apparent that some law enforcement agencies are at the forefront of providing their employees and the family members left behind after an LODD with tools to move forward effectively, others are not. Research shows there are still many agencies that have not begun to prepare their departments for the grieving process or the negative effects that are imminent following line of duty deaths.

The following is a review of literature related to what assistance there is and what agencies are doing to prepare their officers for LODD. The line of duty death policies of the following law enforcement agencies were reviewed: Virginia State Police, Kansas City Police Department, Norman Police Department

(Oklahoma), California Highway Patrol, and Amtrak Police Department. Each department had its own level of detail, as did the fire agency policies reviewed: Colorado Springs, Long Beach, California and Charlotte, North Carolina, fire departments.

An equally important role in providing the proper framework to assist agencies to move succinctly forward after a line of duty death are employee assistance programs, chaplain services and peer to peer support. These categories provide evaluative research used to ascertain the best practices that have proven to be beneficial to the employees that survive a coworker's or family member's line of duty death.

### **1. Employee Assistance Programs**

The extensive information available on employee assistance programs (EAPs) is vast. Deciphering the EAP model used from agency to agency is difficult. The programs vary in degree from strict, formalized programs to others that are unsystematically created without guidelines. Regardless of program size or formality, Andrew T. Young states having a program already in place has proven successful during critical incidents because there are established personnel that grieving employees already know and trust to confide in and seek guidance from.<sup>15</sup> This method is practical and can work with the right planning in place; however, it requires anticipatory planning, which many agencies do not have or are unable or unwilling to employ the necessary resources to do so.

Just having a program in place may not be enough, however in the article, "Police Employee Assistance Programs: Becoming an Informed Client," Mike Wasilewski and Althea Olson state that many officers at various agencies do not have a great deal of confidence in the confidentiality of traditional employee

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew T. Young, "Complicated CISM in a Police Department after Two Line-of-Duty Deaths," *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health* 9, no. 1 (2007): 64, <http://omicsonline.com/open-access/associations-between-major-life-events-traumatic-incidents-and-depression-among-buffalo-police-officers.pdf>.

assistance programs.<sup>16</sup> This creates discord when a LODD or other significant event occurs and an employee is referred to participate in an EAP. There is no benefit when the employee approaches the situation with the predetermined belief that their conversation will not be held in confidence. The stigma of utilizing an EAP has often been considered a sign of weakness, which has prevented their use.

## **2. Chaplain Services**

Reverends Julie Taylor and Diane M. Ryan researched and wrote an article titled “Roles in Respite Centers: Peers, Chaplains, and Mental Health.” This article emphasizes the necessity of providing respite centers for first responders during crisis situations.<sup>17</sup> This article offered a different perspective from many of the other articles available. The authors believe that respite centers provide a natural time and place for first responders to congregate and thus allow them to be more accepting of mental health services.<sup>18</sup> The premise of first responders being surrounded by other first responders is what these researchers believe is needed to allow them to let their guard down and be comfortable and receptive to available services.

There are various police chaplain programs that train various faith-based leaders specifically for law enforcement ministry.<sup>19</sup> These programs hold seminars and provide detailed training on how to deal with law enforcement issues from a religious standpoint. Research shows chaplain programs can be key to healing after a critical incident.

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<sup>16</sup> Mike Wasilewski, and Althea Olson, “Police Employee Assistance Programs: Becoming an Informed Client,” *Law Officer*, January 28, 2013, <http://www.lawofficer.com/articles/2013/01/police-employee-assistance-pro.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Julie Taylor, and Diane M. Ryan, “Roles in Respite Centers: Peers, Chaplains, and Mental Health,” *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health* 9, no. 1 (2007): 66–67. <http://omicsonline.com/open-access/associations-between-major-life-events-traumatic-incidents-and-depression-among-buffalo-police-officers.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> “Police Chaplain Training,” Police and Fire Chaplain’s Training Academy, 2015. <http://www.policechaplaintraining.com/>.

### 3. Peer Support

*CopShock*, written by Allen R. Kates, is a summation of his research and comparison of peer support groups from small to large agencies around the country. It provides descriptions of various peer to peer support groups and a great deal of information regarding the cost and benefits of these programs. His findings prove the cost effectiveness of spending the money in advance to train officers to be valuable peer support personnel as opposed to foregoing the process altogether. One such example shows that employees returned to work sooner, and the money spent on early treatment, rather than delayed treatment, was significantly less.<sup>20</sup> His research concludes that irrespective of the agency's size, peer support is cost effective and beneficial.

In 2011, in the *The Police Chief: The Professional Voice of Law Enforcement*, there is an article written by several authors regarding the significance of peer support groups.<sup>21</sup> This article provides in depth information regarding policies, procedures, peer selection, training, critical incidents, and licensed mental health professional consultations.<sup>22</sup> This article largely agrees with Kates's book, *CopShock*, that adequate peer support is necessary for comprehensive healing after a line of duty death. In addition, his recommendations for use of the West Coast Trauma Retreat and Operation Restore are explored. There appears to be a great deal of information on the topic of line of duty deaths. The challenge is narrowing the research to focus on the information specific to effective frameworks being used to effectively to cope with the after effects of line of duty deaths.

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<sup>20</sup> Allen R. Kates, *CopShock: Surviving Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*, 2nd ed. (Tucson, AZ: Holbrook Street Press, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Mark D. Kamena et al., "Peer Support Teams Fill an Emotional Void in Law Enforcement Agencies," *The Police Chief: The Professional Voice of Law Enforcement*, August 2011, [http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display\\_arch&article\\_id=2450&issue\\_id=82011](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=2450&issue_id=82011).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

The following chapters address the current policies and procedures at the St. Petersburg Police Department regarding line of duty deaths through analysis and assessment to identify areas where policies need to be reexamined. Subsequent chapters review the policies of other law enforcement agencies and fire departments so best practices can be gleaned and summarized, along with strengths and weaknesses, in order to make recommendations for the St. Petersburg Police Department.

#### **D. BACKGROUND**

Until January 2011, the most recent line of duty death at the St. Petersburg Police Department was on August 18, 1980. By 2011, there were only a few remaining employees who remember that tragic afternoon over 30 years ago when an undercover detective was shot multiple times in the chest and killed. All that changed the morning of January 24, 2011. The day started as a typical Monday morning. The author was working as a sergeant at the St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD) and was completing administrative duties at the police station when a detective rushed in and announced an officer was not responding on the radio and possibly suffered a gunshot wound. These words are dreaded by every law enforcement officer (LEO) and the gut-wrenching feelings that followed were the beginning of a nightmare that still has not ended for some.

As the author was responding across town to the scene with lights and sirens blaring, it was unclear exactly what had taken place. The less than 10-minute drive to the scene seemed like hours. Listening to the dispatcher call the officer on the radio, over and over, it became clear that the silence meant he was unable to respond. Further radio transmissions indicated that a wanted suspect had shot an officer in an attic and was still armed and shooting at other officers.

Arriving at the scene was a day like no other, and the lives of many changed drastically in a single moment. The look of shock on the faces of friends and coworkers was unparalleled. Definitive statements were not made at the



time; however, it was quite clear to all on scene that a tragic event had taken place and the officer was not responding to dispatch because he was unable to respond. In fact, many knew he was dead, and it was not yet 7:30 a.m. Rescue efforts began, which led to more gunshots fired by the suspect at officers and another law enforcement officer stating that he had been shot. This was further disturbing as the author's spouse, a fellow law enforcement officer, was on scene as volleys of bullets were ringing out.

As officers remained professional, yet anxious, retrieving the bodies of their fallen coworkers and friends was paramount. Rescue efforts took most out of their comfort zones and into scenarios that could not be predicted. Some of this involved commandeering heavy construction equipment and positioning it to provide cover and safety, entering an attic by stepping on the back of a kneeling coworker and pulling down the body of a dead coworker and friend from the attic after untangling cords and ductwork wrapped around his body.

Within 30 minutes, a St. Petersburg Police K9 officer and police sergeant were killed and a United States' marshal was shot, altering life at the St. Petersburg Police Department. Later that afternoon, the bullet-ridden body of the killer was found inside the home and the home was demolished by order of the mayor. The author, a sergeant and friend of many involved, became the confidant of several officers and heard numerous chilling personal accounts of what many had experienced that day and the emotions they continue to experience. The St. Petersburg Police Department suffered two great losses that day. A community mourned and the outpouring of care and concern were nothing anyone had experienced previously. Some began to heal, but most had to learn a new normal.

Exactly four weeks after the tragedy of losing two officers, the nightmare began again. The author was awakened at home by a phone call from a detective advising that a SPPD officer had been shot and was being transported to the hospital. Knowing this officer does not regularly wear a ballistic vest made it apparent, although extremely difficult to fathom, another officer had been killed.

The 15-minute drive to the hospital brought up recent memories of the two officers killed and the experiences those involved were still dealing with that had yet to be resolved.

Arriving at the hospital was surreal. The driveway and corridors were lined with officers experiencing a great deal of emotional turmoil and downright disbelief. With grief and a heavy heart, the author looked into the eyes of many who seemed distraught and, quite frankly, broken. The stoic faces and solemn demeanor gave the hospital a somber and defeated feeling. There were countless individuals recalling and expressing where they were and what they experienced just 28 days prior. Several of the officers involved in this incident were reliving what had taken place and second-guessing their own actions. This incident differed greatly from the previous incident because the suspect who killed the officer was at large. The emotions of the officers, civilian employees, and first responders ran high, ranging from comforting friends to wanting vengeance or justice. After several taxing and emotional hours, it was time to switch gears and assist in the manhunt and apprehension of the individual responsible.

Leaving the hospital and responding to the incident command center made for a difficult drive. The proximity of where the officer was killed, the police station, the hospital, and now the incident command center were extremely close. There were police lights on every street engaged in the manhunt. Numerous agencies sent personnel to assist in the hunt, and the number of officers involved was staggering. There were investigative leads coming in regularly, which kept officers focused on the priority of locating the suspect; however it was clearly an emotional day as many people worked double and triple shifts. Once the suspect was apprehended, there was a debriefing held for the many agencies assisting in the manhunt and the emotions of what had taken place over the last 30 days began to show.

Law enforcement officers, city officials, civilian personnel, first responders, and concerned residents were asking how something like this could happen. An

agency that had not experienced an officer killed in the line of duty in over 30 years was now dealing with three in a 28-day timeframe. The looming questions were: What has gone wrong in society for this to take place? Is this a trend that is likely to continue? More importantly, what are the needed steps to move forward as an agency?

This thesis addresses the following assumptions regarding line of duty deaths.

1. Employee assistance programs are vital to effective policies to assist with the healing process for individual officers and for the agency as a functioning unit following a line of duty death.
2. Once agencies experience a line of duty death, they will be better equipped to handle line of duty deaths, or agencies that have experienced line of duty deaths are more prepared and have better policies to handle line of duty deaths.
3. Not addressing line of duty deaths has negative effects on the functioning of both individual officers and the entire agency.

## **E. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used is a comparative analysis of what formal and informal and written or unwritten policies are in place by law enforcement agencies and fire departments across the United States for line of duty deaths. Five law enforcement agencies were chosen for their range in size, scope, and range of experience with line of duty deaths. Two municipal police departments were chosen: one that has experienced over 100 line of duty deaths, and the other has experienced less than 100 line of duty deaths. Two state agencies were chosen: one that has experienced more than 100 line of duty deaths and the other with less than 100 line of duty deaths. One federally funded agency was chosen that has not experienced a line of duty death. Three fire departments were selected for their longevity; all have been established for more than 115 years. They each have experienced line of duty deaths, and they have a wide range of policy length and depth. The research focuses on effective policies in place around the United States in an attempt to create and implement policies

based on best practices that have been proven successful for recommendations to the St. Petersburg Police Department.

The following chapters define the policies and procedures in place addressing line of duty deaths at the St. Petersburg Police Department, Amtrak Police Department, Virginia State Police, Kansas City Police Department, Norman (Oklahoma) Police Department, California Highway Patrol, Colorado Springs Fire Department, Long Beach (California) Fire Department, and Charlotte (North Carolina) Fire Department. Including the St. Petersburg Police Department, this sampling represents nine law enforcement and fire departments across the United States. These chapters focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each agency's policies, what aspects should be emulated, and which need redefining. The ultimate goal is to glean viable data for implementation at SPPD.

## **II. ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT**

St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD) was selected as the focus of this research due to the author's knowledge and affiliation with it. The desire is to discover what other law enforcement agencies and fire departments are currently using to be resilient when faced with a line of duty death and create a feasible list of recommendations to introduce to the St. Petersburg Police Department. SPPD has experienced the loss of officers in the line of duty, and, without a policy in place, it has not been equipped to manage the effects of the loss productively. There are many aspects of a line of duty death, and the key issues describing the need are discussed in this chapter.

The St. Petersburg Police Department is a municipal law enforcement agency with an authorized strength of 562 sworn officers and 250 civilian employees. The population of St. Petersburg is 253,693 and the city has 61.74 square miles of land.<sup>23</sup> According to the City of St. Petersburg website, "St. Petersburg is surrounded by 244 miles of shoreline" and has "the largest city marina in the southeast."<sup>24</sup> See Figures 2 and 3.

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<sup>23</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, St. Petersburg, FL," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified October 14, 2015, accessed November 5, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1263000.html>.

<sup>24</sup> "St. Petersburg—'The Sunshine City,'" City of St. Petersburg, last modified October 14, 2015, accessed November 5, 2015 [http://www.stpete.org/visiting\\_the\\_city/](http://www.stpete.org/visiting_the_city/).

Figure 2. Map of Florida



Adapted from Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, *Florida Map: Cities and Highways*, Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, 2015, <http://www.dmvflorida.org/florida-map.shtml>.

Figure 3. Map of St. Petersburg

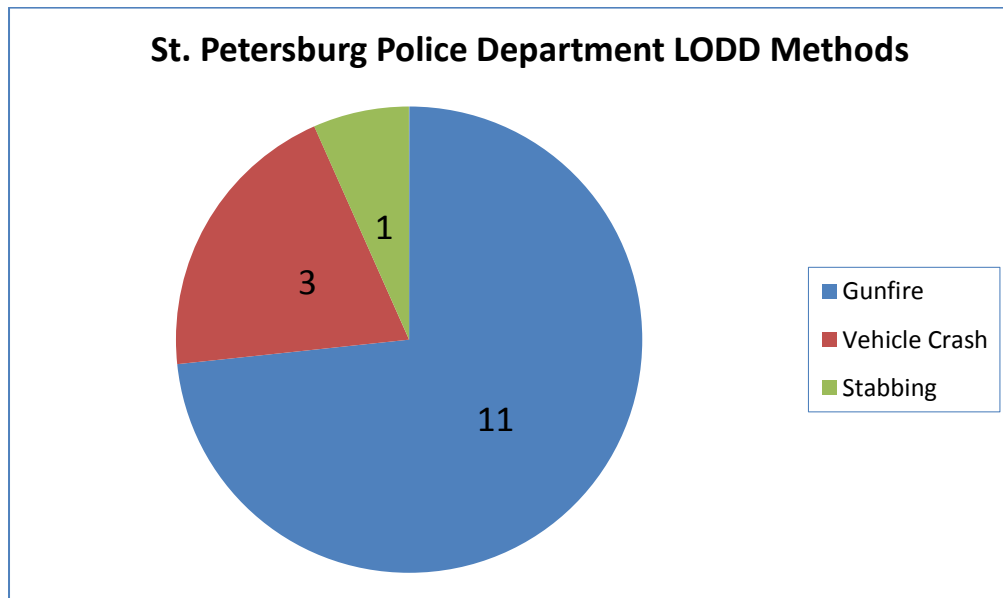


Sources: Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v., "St. Petersburg, Florida," accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=st+petersburg+florida>

The St. Petersburg Police Department has experienced 15 line of duty deaths in its 112-year existence. Figure 4 shows that of the 15 deaths, 11 were caused by gunfire, three were the result of vehicle crashes, and one was a stabbing.<sup>25</sup> With 12 of the 15 (or 80 percent) of the deaths caused by intentional felonious acts, the department has encountered the aftereffects of unexpected loss. This harkens back to understanding the difference between killings versus deaths and the need to have a formulated strategy to guide the agency through emotionally turbulent times.

<sup>25</sup> "Fallen Officers," St .Petersburg Police Department, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://police.stpete.org/about-us/history-fallen-officers.html>.

Figure 4. Method of Line of Duty Deaths for the St. Petersburg Police Department 1905–2011



Adapted from "Fallen Officers," St .Petersburg Police Department.

The St. Petersburg Police Department was officially established with the appointment of Police Chief James J. Mitchell in 1903 and four fulltime police officers. Ironically, Chief Mitchell was the first SPPD officer killed in the line of duty on December 25, 1905. According to the St. Petersburg Police Department's website:

On Christmas Day, Chief Mitchell arrested a local man for disorderly conduct behind a saloon on Central Avenue between Second and Third Street. While escorting his prisoner to jail, Mitchell was attacked with a butcher knife, from behind, by a second man named John Thomas. The butcher knife 'pierced the heart' of Mitchell and he released his hold on his prisoner and turned around to defend himself. Although the Chief fell mortally wounded, he was able to fire shots and fatally wounded his assailant. Officer Bill Murphy who witnessed the attack also shot at Thomas, causing disfigurement to his nose. Thomas fell dead to the ground and the prisoner was taken into custody.

The news of the killing traveled like wildfire and within minutes there was an angry crowd of armed citizens, surrounding the jail. The citizens were carrying various weapons including axes. The mob demanded that Thomas be released to them for a lynching



and the officers, who were clearly outnumbered, attempted to reason with the infuriated mob. Not knowing Thomas was dead in his cell, due to Mitchell's gunshot fire as he dropped to the ground, they stormed the jail in an attempt to kill him. The four police officers were not able to cope with the dangerous crowd and soon the officers were overcome. The crowd brought ladders and several people climbed to the jail window with guns in hand and shot Thomas repeatedly.<sup>26</sup>

There have been 15 officers killed in the line of duty at SPPD, which is a relatively small number in comparison to other agencies of comparable size. The longest gap between line of duty deaths was 31 years, from 1980 to 2011. However, in 2011, the department experienced two officers killed in the line of duty in a half hour time span and a third officer killed 28 days later. This series of events placed the St. Petersburg Police Department in a precarious situation due to the short period of time between line of duty deaths and the surprisingly varying degrees of reaction of the community.

In 1905, when Chief Mitchell was killed, citizens rallied and forced their way onto the property of the police department in the name of vengeance for their chief. This is the polar opposite of the community's reaction following the murders of the officers in 2011, when police officers began to receive death threats. Some members of the community supported the police and were quite sympathetic. Unfortunately, many citizens joined together to show their support for the family of the individual who killed the two police officers in the January incident. It is largely believed the community support stemmed from his neighborhood roots and his brother was a well-known professional boxer from St. Petersburg.

It was a slap in the face to the St. Petersburg police employees when their former police chief and current senior administrator of community enrichment comforted the family of the subject who killed their two coworkers and friends. He

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<sup>26</sup> "In Memoriam: James A. Mitchell Chief of Police: End of Watch: December 25, 1905," accessed October 7, 2015, St. Petersburg Police Department, <http://police.stpete.org/fallen-officers/memorial-mitchell.html>.

had been the chief of police for the last four years of his 30-year career and supervised both officers that were killed; however, he chose not to attend their funeral but instead to attend the funeral of the dead cop killer. When asked to justify his actions, he stated that his “reasons for not attending the funerals of those officers were in my opinion, legitimate.”<sup>27</sup> He further explained that he did not want to relive the feelings he experienced 30 years earlier at a funeral of an officer who was a friend.<sup>28</sup> He also stated that the issue was not that he did not attend the fallen officers’ funeral but that he attended the killer’s funeral.<sup>29</sup> This decision caused a great deal of tension and when another officer was killed 28 days later, and the mayor required high-ranking city officials to attend the funeral of the fallen officer. The former chief again chose not to attend and shortly after this incident, he was fired from his city position by the mayor for a “loss of confidence.”<sup>30</sup> After he was terminated, there was a sense of relief and even redemption felt by many at the police department who were still mourning the loss of their coworkers and friends.

The employees of the department were dumbfounded as to why their community chose to embrace those who supported such a vicious act and had turned their backs on the officers. Many employee representatives requested answers from current leadership and felt betrayed. These feelings of alienation started chipping away at the work performance of employees and the morale and sense of belonging declined. The once close-knit department began to unravel.

This lack of support was felt by the agency once again as citizens joined together in their support of the 16-year old cop killer who was facing murder charges in the February incident. Social media sites were created demanding the release of this “child” and numerous supporters appeared at court hearings

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<sup>27</sup> “Former St. Petersburg Chief Fired after Not Attending Slain Cops’ Funerals,” *Police One*, March 4, 2011, <http://www.policeone.com/chiefs-sheriffs/articles/3393919-former-stpetersburg>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

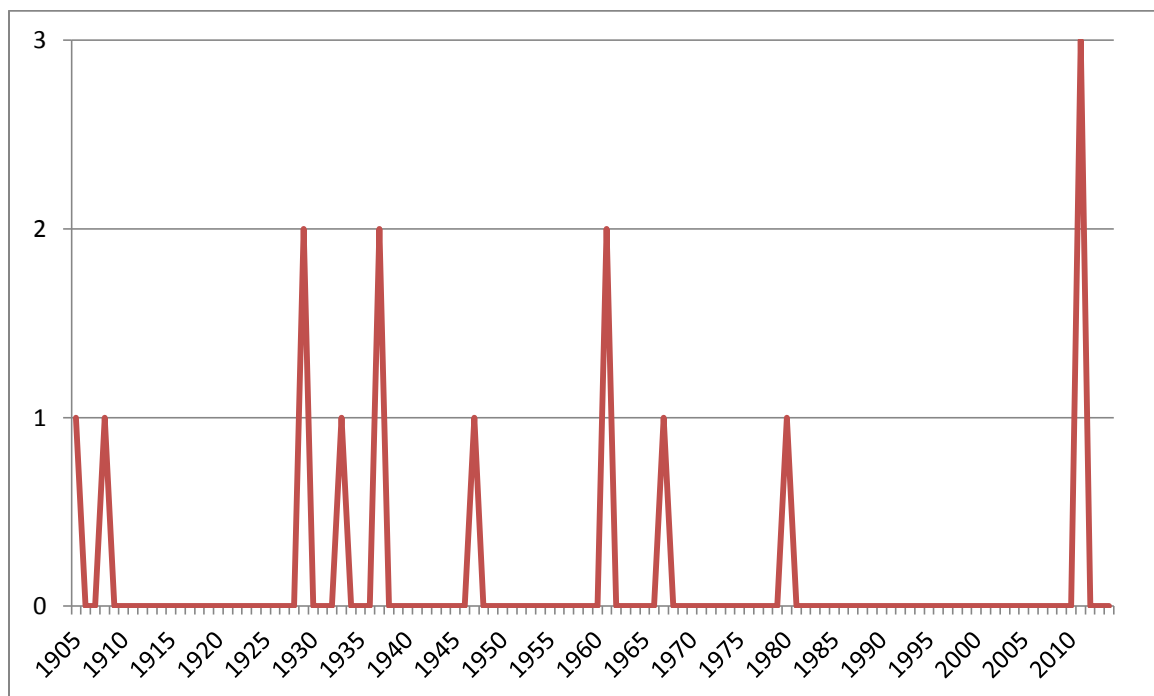
<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Jamal Thallji, “Fired St. Petersburg Official Goliath Davis Defends Decision to Miss Police Funerals,” *Tampa Bay Times*, March 4, 2011.

wearing apparel displaying their disgust for the police and desire for justice for a confessed murderer. In subsequent months, as officers patrolled the city, they were subjected to derogatory comments about the three officers killed. Many of the comments were quite graphic and included threats that theirs would be the next name added to the list of dead cops and the three were just the beginning of what was to come.

The interactions with the citizens became negative and were detrimental to the healing process. Experiencing three deaths in 28 days caused many employees to question their chosen profession (see Figure 5). This was magnified by the dissension in the ranks that dissolved the trust and camaraderie that was once felt in the halls of the St. Petersburg Police Department.

Figure 5. St. Petersburg Police Department Line of Duty Deaths by Year



Adapted from St .Petersburg Police Department, "Fallen Officers." Note: there were no LODDs from 1980 to 2011, and no other year had three deaths.

The 30-year gap between deaths forged a false sense of security and likely contributed to the complacency of officers. This complacency also allowed the department to lag behind in the area of modern policies and preparation for what many other law enforcement agencies had been facing for years. When the officers were killed in 2011, the *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) Policy*, dated 1996, and the *Employee Assistance Program Policy*, dated 2008, provided minimal direction.

Jeffrey Mitchell defines the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing as a “specific, 7-phase, small group, supportive crisis intervention process.”<sup>31</sup> In 1974, Jeffrey Mitchell developed CISD to assist law enforcement officers, firefighters, and paramedics cope with gravely stressful occurrences.<sup>32</sup> Many refer to it as story-telling coping method after a significant and traumatic event has taken place. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing is part of the Critical Incident Stress Management program and can be combined with other efforts to assist with handling stressful events. Critical incident stress management programs have become a common practice that many homogeneous groups implement for coping.

The St. Petersburg Police Department began using the CISD model in the 1980s after joining the Tampa Bay Regional Critical Incident Team. CISD allows for immediate acknowledgement of the individuals’ feelings and provides coping mechanisms for people to deal with their feelings. Since many people doubt the validity of their feelings and wonder if what they are experiencing is “normal,” CISD provides a sense of normalcy for those exposed to trauma and a safe place for them to express those feelings. Not everyone is prone to sharing their feelings, for them CISD is not useful or an accepted way of coping with their trauma.

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<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey T. Mitchell, *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2014), <http://drustvo-psihologa.rs.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CriticalIncidentStressDebriefing.pdf>, 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

The CISD policy was written when the city experienced racial divide and civil unrest for several days in the summer of 1996 after a white police officer shot and killed a black suspect attempting to run him over with a vehicle.<sup>33</sup> The *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Policy* does not address line of duty deaths; instead, it focuses on incidents involving citizens and high-risk situations. Without a specific policy, any after-action taken, counseling, and psychological preparedness took place at the advisement and discretion of the chief of police. Some of the procedures included employee referrals for officers by supervisors who deemed it necessary, psychiatric evaluation for all officers who fired their weapons on the January 24, 2011 incident, and attendance at a round table critical incident debriefing.

#### **A. 2011 DEBRIEFING AND OUTCOME**

Several months following the two shootings in 2011, a post-shooting review session was held to discuss lessons learned with representatives from local and federal agencies that had recently lost officers in the line of duty. The meeting consisted of two overviews given by leaders of the agency who had experienced the most recent local law enforcement officer shootings, followed by four breakout sessions. The breakout sessions were titled Tactical, Training and Equipment, Executive and Policy, and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).<sup>34</sup>

The outcome of the Tactical breakout session and the Training and Equipment breakout session led to the determination of areas that needed improvement. Great strides have been made in this area by SPPD, which included different training methods and techniques being taught in the annual Mobile Field Force Training. The SPPD reaction was to correct the tactical issues

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<sup>33</sup> "St. Petersburg Quiet as Leaders Assess Riots: Civil Rights Commission to Help Probe Violence," *CNN Interactive*, October 26, 1996, [http://www.cnn.com/US/9610/26/st.pete/index.html?\\_s=PM:S](http://www.cnn.com/US/9610/26/st.pete/index.html?_s=PM:S).

<sup>34</sup> St. Petersburg Police Department, *Post Shooting Review Session: Executive Overview* (St. Petersburg, FL: St. Petersburg Police Department, 2011).

and not focus on the underlying emotional effects of line of duty deaths. Choosing to focus on tangible methods to institute change boosted the morale of many employees, and it appeared that leadership was responsive to the need for improvement.

Community relations were not addressed on a large scale by the department; however, there were steps taken on a small scale to garner the support of the community. One of the steps taken to bridge the gap with the community, which began in 2014, was hosting open forums in the community with law enforcement officers. These meetings are still in place today and are advertised; anyone in the community is welcome to attend. The purpose is to breakdown some of the barriers that were built when the former police chief and senior administrator of community enrichment was terminated.

The Training and Equipment breakout session also led to the purchase of several new pieces of equipment. In the coming months, officers were equipped with pistol-mounted lights on their duty weapons, new holsters, pole cameras, tactical mirrors, and external vest carriers. The department also obtained an armored rescue vehicle, modern ballistic shields, and infrared motion detectors. There was no hesitation in acquiring the equipment and making changes in tactical preparedness.

In the Executive and Policy breakout session, it was evident that there were other areas that could benefit from redeveloping and implementing new policies. In the CISM breakout session, it was clear that providing resources to react in an effective and resilient manner needed improving. These breakout sessions highlighted the reality that the procedures were not consistent from employee to employee and some crucial aspects of the incident were not taken into consideration. For example, there were officers on the scene of the shootings and heavily involved in rescue efforts that were not required to receive a psychiatric evaluation or attend the debriefing because they did not fire their weapons. The criteria regarding the firing of a weapon was not a standing policy; however, it was instituted and followed. There were others who did not meet the

criteria who were greatly impacted by their involvement and not offered assistance. One example is officers who previously attempted to take the wanted suspect into custody with negative results felt this could have been avoided if they had successfully apprehended him. Another example is the officer who responded to the call of a prowler had requested that another officer, who was ultimately shot and killed, check the area for the suspect. The author has listened to countless details of the emotionally scarring struggles of how these incidents have affected employees and is aware of battles that many are still fighting.

## **B. AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

The primary resource available for St. Petersburg Police Department employees at the time of the 2011 incidents was an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinator. The EAP coordinator assisted those affected from 2011 until 2013; however, without much experience or training in LODD, the efforts were futile. This position was left vacant for over a year when the EAP coordinator retired in 2013. Many of the department employees were left in a fragile state following those three life-altering events. The EAP coordinator position was filled in the fall of 2014 and the current EAP coordinator is in the process of restructuring the role and establishing effective parameters.

The department is in the process of revising and adding one instructional and two general orders relating to employee wellness. These three orders combined are a step in the right direction and touch on various facets of wellness. The instructional order, now titled *Employee Support Services*, has been revised and replaces the previous instructional order addressing critical incident stress debriefing from 1996. One general order, *Employee Assistance Program*, was updated in early 2015. The second is a new general order titled *Police Chaplain Program*, which was created in early 2015. This program is in the process of being launched and embraced by the department employees. Several memorandums have been written containing updated information;

however, there has yet to be a SPPD general order established specifically addressing line of duty death.

The *Employee Support Services* instructional order is the most inclusive of the three orders and is the only one that mentions line of duty deaths. It touches on various facets of wellness and defines many terms used to assist in handling critical incidents. In addition, this order introduces many tools that can be used by law enforcement agencies to remain viable and effective after a line of duty death.<sup>35</sup>

The *Employee Assistance Program* is a resource and referral service to assist employees with either personal or professional issues. This general order lists some of the available resources, which include the department's Compassionate Assistance with Respect and Empathy (CARE) Team, Peer Support Team and psychological services, which can all be greatly beneficial for grieving officers after a line of duty death.

The new *Police Chaplain Program* general order has been established to bring emotional support to employees, their families, and citizens. As part of the duties and responsibilities of police chaplains, the program indicates that they will "provide spiritual guidance, counseling assistance, and support to the St. Petersburg Police Department personnel and their families."<sup>36</sup> Once this policy is well established, the department will have a spiritual resource that can assist personnel after a line of duty death.

Healing after a traumatic incident can be done in many ways. The department owes to the 15 St. Petersburg Police Department officers who have been killed in the line of duty to implement sound strategies to move forward in an effective manner so that their deaths were not in vain. By updating and instituting these general and instructional orders, the St. Petersburg Police

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<sup>35</sup> St. Petersburg Police Department, *St. Petersburg Police Department Instructional Order: Employee Support Services* (St. Petersburg, FL: St. Petersburg Police Department, 2014).

<sup>36</sup> St. Petersburg Police Department, *St. Petersburg Police Department General Order: Police Chaplain Program* (St. Petersburg, FL: St. Petersburg Police Department, 2014).



Department has taken an initial step towards proactive thinking. This is a step in the right direction; however, it is not enough for the department to become a resilient agency. By analyzing the policies in place by other law enforcement agencies and their efficient practices regarding line of duty deaths, a comprehensive plan can be formulated for a line of duty death policy at the St. Petersburg Police Department. Chapter III examines other law enforcement agencies and define the policies they currently have in place with an emphasis on viable solutions.

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### **III. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES POLICY ANALYSIS**

The line of duty death policies and procedures of the following law enforcement agencies have been examined for this research: Amtrak Police Department, Virginia State Police, Kansas City Police Department, Norman Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol. Each agency has some policies not shared by other agencies. The level of depth of each policy is substantial and is likely built to suit the specific needs of the respective department. The agencies identified vary in size and scope, which in some cases reflects the type of policy they utilize. Some of the differences contribute to their preparedness for line of duty deaths. This chapter will analyze the different policies and a later chapter will glean the best practices for a policy recommendation suited to fit the needs of the St. Petersburg Police Department.

#### **A. AMTRAK POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Amtrak Police Department (APD) is a unique agency because its span of control crosses 46 states and is located in more than 20 states (see Figure 6).<sup>37</sup> There are approximately 20 civilian employees and 488 active sworn officers whose authority is equivalent to the municipal or state law enforcement agency jurisdiction in which they operate. Amtrak police officers are “required to be commissioned in either the state of legal residence or state of primary employment and are authorized by Federal Statute to enforce laws and conduct investigations nationwide, related to crimes occurring on Amtrak property.”<sup>38</sup>

According to the Amtrak Police Department’s website, “Amtrak’s enabling legislation under the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970, now found at 49 U.S.C. 24101, established the authority for Amtrak to have its own police force.”<sup>39</sup> For

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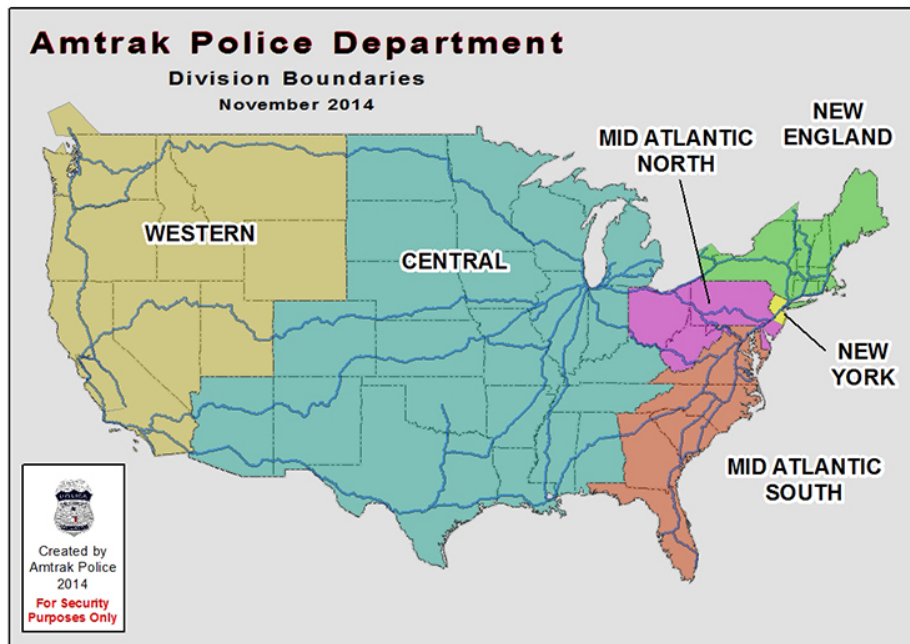
<sup>37</sup> “Amtrak Police Department,” Amtrak Police Department, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://police.amtrak.com/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

more than 40 years, APD has experienced several reorganizations and its roles and responsibilities have changed several times. Throughout all of these changes, APD has, fortunately, never experienced a line of duty death. The Amtrak Police Department is effectively connected with law enforcement partners in the Metro D.C. area and stay abreast of line of duty trends and events. In the event APD experiences a line of duty death, it would rely on information available through Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS).

Figure 6. Amtrak Police Department Span of Control and Locations



Source: Amtrak Police Department, "Amtrak Police Department Division Boundaries," 2014, <http://police.amtrak.com/index.php/overview/patrol>.

Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) is a non-profit organization that provides resources to assist families and coworkers of fallen officers.<sup>40</sup> It was founded in 1984 and now has over 50 chapters and more than 30,000

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<sup>40</sup> "C.O.P.S. Concerns of Police Survivors," Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc., <http://www.nationalcops.org/index.asp>, accessed August 9, 2015

members.<sup>41</sup> COPS is governed by a national board of law enforcement survivors and offers programs and training to assist families, as well as agencies, to help rebuild after a line of duty death.<sup>42</sup> COPS is the only nationwide organization that has programs specifically designed to aid law enforcement agencies on how to respond to the death of a department member. They also have camps and retreats created for the young children, teenagers, spouses, parents, siblings, in-laws, and coworkers of fallen officers.<sup>43</sup>

The Amtrak Police Department directive policy, entitled *Critical Incident Procedures*, is a two-page policy, and it has been in place since 2008. This directive gives guidance to officers who have been involved in a critical incident. It defines a critical incident as “an event in which there is a serious bodily injury or death involving Amtrak police personnel.”<sup>44</sup> By definition, a line of duty death is a critical incident. The policy is not very specific; however, it outlines what “should” take place immediately at the scene and in the days and weeks following a critical incident. The policy is more logistical and administrative in nature, but it does provide several recommendations regarding what measures should be taken to assist officers following a critical incident. Although this directive is not specifically written for line of duty deaths, it provides some of the necessary tools to prepare for the challenges that will be ahead.

## **B. VIRGINIA STATE POLICE**

The Virginia State Police is charged with performing statewide law enforcement, which includes patrolling the entire state of Virginia for traffic concerns.<sup>45</sup> The state of Virginia has a population of 8.326 million people and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> “Amtrak Police Department,” Amtrak Police Department.

<sup>45</sup> Virginia State Police, *Virginia State Police Facts and Figures Report 2014* (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Police, 2014).

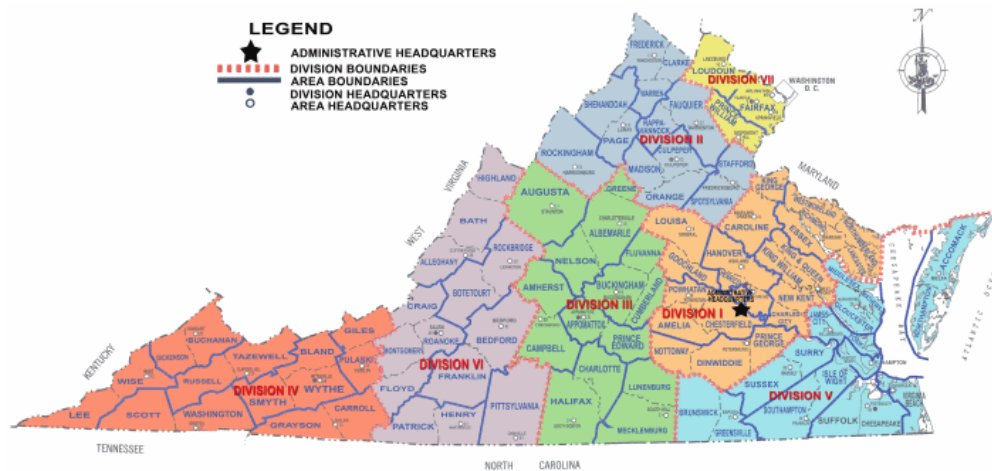
covers 39,409 square miles (see Figure 7).<sup>46</sup> The Virginia State Police (VSP) began in 1919 and currently has 1,987 sworn and 740 civilian employees (see Figure 8).

Figure 7. Map of Eastern United States



Source: Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v. "Virginia," accessed November 18, 2015, <http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=virginia>.

Figure 8. Virginia State Police Division Map

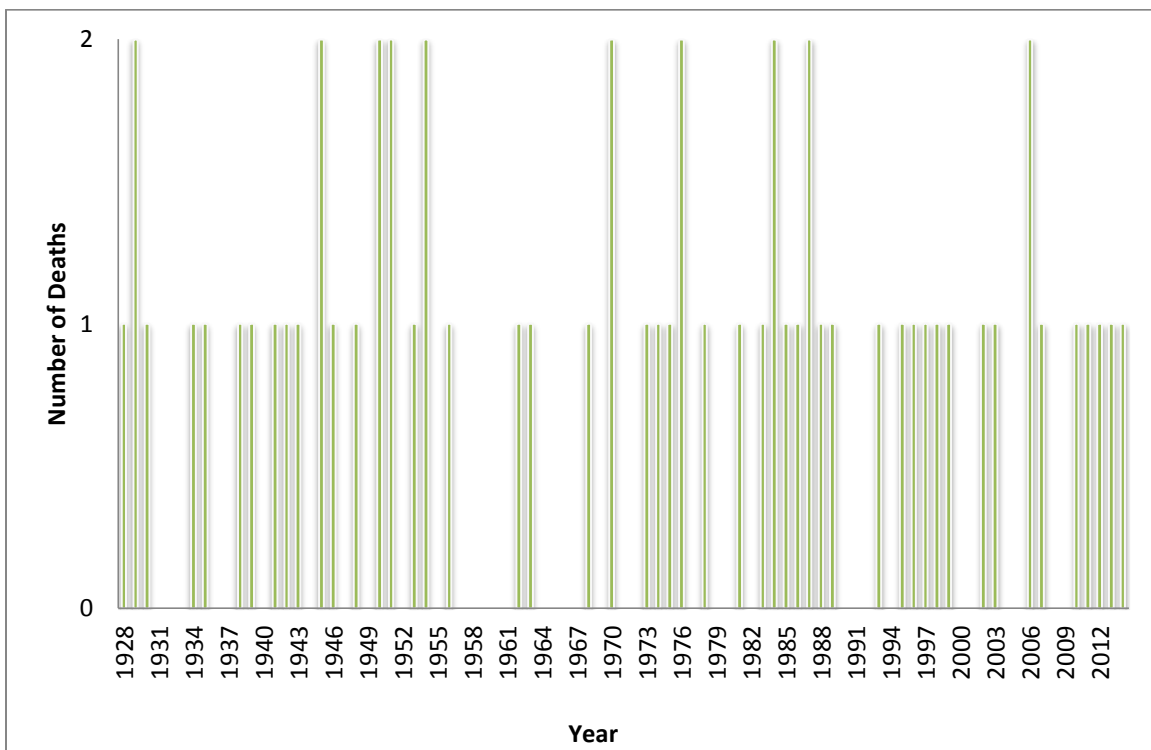


Source: Virginia Department of State Police, "Virginia State Police Administrative Headquarters," accessed August 12, 2015, [http://www.vsp.state.va.us/images/map\\_divisions\\_with\\_counties.gif](http://www.vsp.state.va.us/images/map_divisions_with_counties.gif).

<sup>46</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, Virginia," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 30, 2014, accessed August 29, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51000.html>.

In the 96 years of its existence, VSP has experienced 60 line of duty deaths (see Figure 9). Forty-two of those deaths, or 70 percent, involved a motor vehicle.<sup>47</sup> This is an inherently dangerous assignment, since one of the officers' priorities is overseeing the roadways of the state. Of the 42 traffic related deaths, seven Virginia State Police officers were shot as a result of a traffic incident.<sup>48</sup> Since its first line of duty death in 1928, the longest time span without a death was a six-year time span from 1956 to 1962.<sup>49</sup>

Figure 9. Virginia State Police Line of Duty Deaths: 1928–2014



Source: "Colonel C. W. Woodson, Jr. Memorial Gallery," Virginia Department of State Police. This graph shows the longest duration without a line of duty death for VSP was a six-year period from 1956 to 1962.

<sup>47</sup> "Colonel C. W. Woodson, Jr. Memorial Gallery," Virginia Department of State Police, accessed August 9, 2015, [http://www.vsp.state.va.us/memorial\\_gallery.shtm](http://www.vsp.state.va.us/memorial_gallery.shtm).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

The Virginia State Police has a line of duty death general order. The agency revised this policy in July 2009 and is scheduled for review in April 2016. This general order specifies that it is the department's policy to "provide tangible and intangible emotional support" to the family of the fallen officer.<sup>50</sup>

As an agency that experiences line of duty deaths at the frequency that Virginia State Police does, its policy should be more in depth. It is only three pages and includes discussions of various aspects of logistics as well as emotional support. Additionally, it states that the department is to "provide guidance to our employees and survivors who are confronted with the traumatic incident."<sup>51</sup> This addresses the employees that are left behind after a line of duty death and with 60 line of duty deaths; the number of employees affected over the years is immense.

Although the Virginia State Police policy is written in just three pages, it does provide ample direction on various areas of concern. Some of these include defining line of duty death, defining next of kin, specific notification procedures for family and coworkers of the fallen, the appointment of a family liaison and their responsibilities, assisting with funeral protocol and family desires, details regarding death benefits, and the provision of moral support to the family. The policy also addresses what takes place immediately following a line of duty death and has a chronological timeline of what to expect in the coming days, weeks, and months. The employees of the State of Virginia, including VSP officers, are covered by the Virginia State Department of Human Resources Employee Assistance Program. This EAP is quite vast and offers grief counseling as well as mental health resources for employees and their family members.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Virginia State Police, *Virginia Department of State Police, General Order ADM 14.06, Line of Duty Death* (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Police, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1.

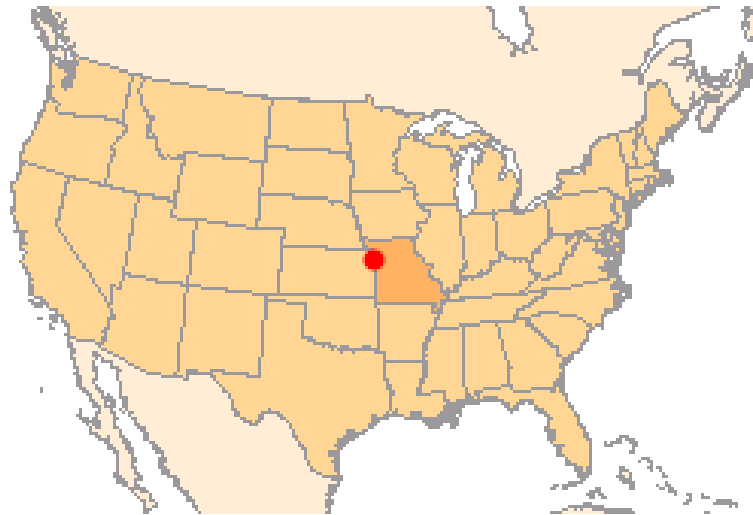
<sup>52</sup> "Employee Benefits," Virginia Department of Human Resources, accessed October 13, 2015, <http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/employeebenefits>.



### C. KANSAS CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT (MISSOURI)

Kansas City is one of the few cities in the United States that overlaps two states. It is the largest city in the state of Missouri covering 314.95 square miles and has a population of 470,800 (see Figures 10 and 11).<sup>53</sup> The Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) commenced April 15, 1874.<sup>54</sup>

Figure 10. Map of the United States State of Missouri, Located in the Midwestern United States



Source: Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v. "Kansas City, Missouri," accessed November 10, 2015, <https://www.wolframalpha.com/KansasCity,Missouri>.

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<sup>53</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, "Kansas City, MO," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 24, 2014, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/29/2938000.html>.

<sup>54</sup> "Kansas City Police Department History," Kansas City Police Department, accessed August 10, 2015, <http://kcmo.gov/police/history/>.

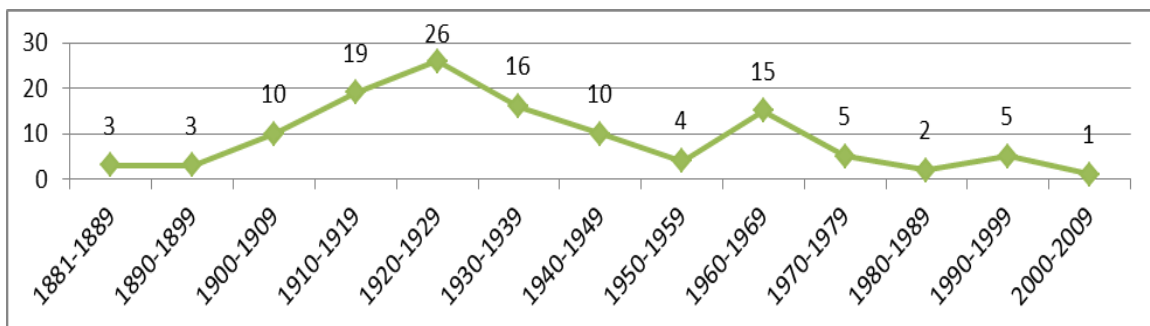
Figure 11. Kansas City, Missouri, Map. Kansas City resides on the border of Kansas and Missouri



Adapted from "Kansas City, MO," University of Texas, accessed November 5, 2015, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world\\_cities/kansas.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_cities/kansas.jpg).

Kansas City Police Department has an authorized strength of 1,438 police officers.<sup>55</sup> In its 141-year history, KCPD has experienced 119 line of duty deaths between the years of 1881 and 2001 (see Figure 12). The leading cause of 71 of these deaths has been gunfire.<sup>56</sup>

Figure 12. Kansas City Police Department, Line of Duty Deaths: 1881 to 2009



Source: "Statistical Information Regarding Officer Deaths," Kansas City, Missouri Police Memorial.

<sup>55</sup> "Kansas City Police Department History," Kansas City Police Department.

<sup>56</sup> "Statistical Information Regarding Officer Deaths," Kansas City, Missouri Police Memorial, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.kcpolicememorial.com/pages/statistics/>.

Kansas City experienced two massacres within a 15-year period from 1933 to 1948, resulting in multiple deaths of police officers. The first one, known as the Union Station Massacre or the Kansas City Massacre, occurred in 1933. According to the website of the Kansas City Police Historical Society, "On the morning of June 17, 1933, a mass murder committed in front of Union Railway Station, Kansas City, Missouri, shocked the American public into a new consciousness of the serious crime problems in the Nation."<sup>57</sup> Four law enforcement officers were shot and killed that day, two were officers from KCPD, one was the McAlester, Oklahoma Police Department chief of police, and the fourth was an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations. They were part of a seven-person team transporting an escaped prisoner after apprehension. He had been on the loose for over two years and when his friends learned of his capture, they devised a plan to free him. In the process, they killed him and the four police officers and shot two other police officers.<sup>58</sup>

The Paseo Massacre was the second massacre and it took place on September 20, 1948. It was the single largest fatal event that resulted in the lives of five Kansas City police officers losing their lives. Two officers responded to a disturbance call at an apartment where they had arrested a subject two days prior. The two officers attempted to arrest the same man again. His brother, who objected to the arrest, grabbed a shotgun and shot and killed one of the officers. The man who was initially going to be arrested shot the second officer and armed himself awaiting the arrival of other officers as his brother fled the scene and was later arrested. As additional officers arrived, he shot and killed three more. The suspect was eventually killed when more officers responded and opened fire on him. During the exchange of gunfire, an innocent bystander, who ran from the scene and refused to stop after being ordered to by a police officer, was also

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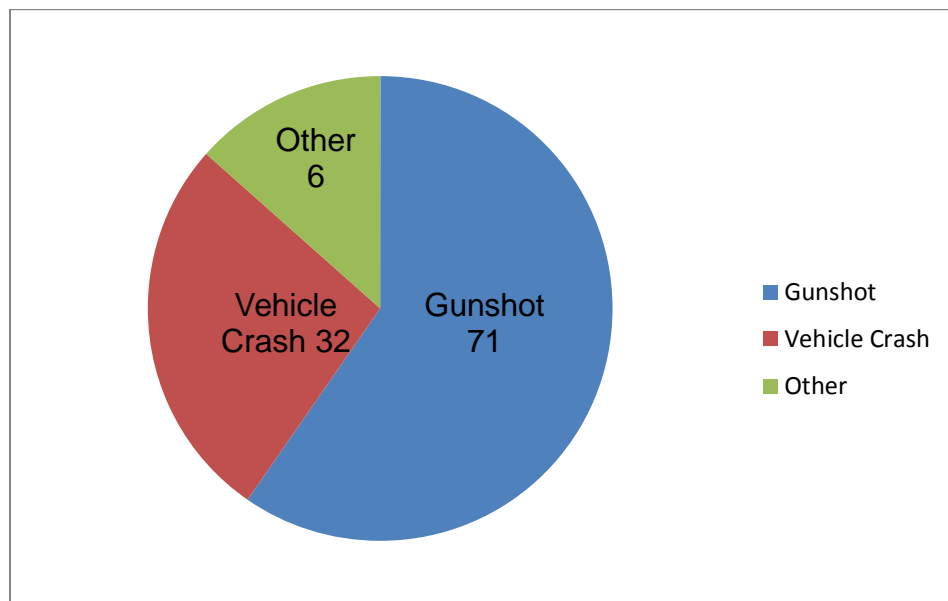
<sup>57</sup> "The Union Station Massacre: Conspiracy to Deliver a Federal Prisoner," Kansas City Police Historical Society, accessed October 12, 2015, <http://www.kcpolicememorial.com/pages/unionstation/>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

shot and killed. In the end, a total of six men were killed in this massacre: five police officers and one citizen.<sup>59</sup>

These two events took the lives of nine police officers, all by gunfire, comprises 60 percent of the line of duty deaths at the Kansas City Police Department. Vehicle crashes account for the second highest cause of LODD or 27 percent of KCPDs line of duty deaths.<sup>60</sup> Of the 119 LODDs, 87 percent were killed as a result of either a shooting or a crash (see Figure 13).<sup>61</sup> This is an extremely high number of violent and unexpected deaths and has the potential to leave the many employees in a state of mourning and looking for coping methods.

Figure 13. KCPD Line of Duty Deaths, Methods



Adapted from "Statistical Information Regarding Officer Deaths," Kansas City, Missouri Police Memorial.

<sup>59</sup> "Paseo Massacre," Kansas City Police Historical Society, accessed October 12, 2015, <http://www.kcpolicememorial.com/pages/paseomass/>.

<sup>60</sup> "Statistical Information Regarding Officer Deaths," Kansas City, Missouri Police Memorial, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.kcpolicememorial.com/pages/statistics/>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

The Kansas City Police Department has three personnel policies in affect to assist with line of duty deaths: *Employee Assistance Program*, *Formal Funeral Plan*, and *Line of Duty Death and Disability Benefits for Officers*. Each policy addresses separate aspects that relate to line of duty deaths.

The *Employee Assistance Program Policy*, dated November 2010, is a brief two-page policy. It addresses the provision of services for employees and their families or household members relating to “relationship, financial, legal, emotional, and health and wellness issues.”<sup>62</sup> Kansas City Police Department uses services provided through the company New Directions Behavioral Health. This service has been in existence since 1995 and offers 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week availability to employees who have the option to call directly for services or referrals.<sup>63</sup> The program’s level of confidentiality is an attractive feature that likely leads to more people using these services than if they were not confidential. Another interesting and convenient characteristic of New Directions is the various ways to utilize its services. Traditional in-person counseling is available; however, it is also available by phone and online.<sup>64</sup>

The next policy is the *Formal Funeral Plan*, dated June 2011. This policy identifies which KCPD employees are responsible for funeral details. This policy is quite detailed and assigns various roles, including a funeral coordinator, family liaison officer, and the person responsible for each portion of the funeral. Additionally, each of these positions is assigned specific duties that are outlined in this policy. It also has a detailed plan pertaining to funerals, including equipment and its storage, uniform requirements, and commands given throughout the funeral. The policy specifies what service is customary for active or retired employees, clarifies who is eligible for a formal funeral and defines

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<sup>62</sup> Kansas City Missouri Police Department, *Kansas City Missouri Police Department Personnel Policy, Policy Series 800: Member’s Health 820—Employee Assistance Program (EAP)* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Missouri Police Department, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> “New Directions Behavioral Health: Employee Assistance Program,” New Directions Behavioral Health, accessed August 24, 2015, <https://www.ndbh.com>.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

circumstances that would exclude the formality, such as dying while committing a crime.<sup>65</sup>

The final policy, dated May 2012, is the *Line of Duty Death and Disability Benefits for Officers*. This policy lists the benefits for which the family of an officer who is killed or disabled in the line off duty is eligible. The policy separates three types of benefits: federal benefits, State of Missouri benefits, and organization benefits (see Figure 14).<sup>66</sup> A representative from the Employee Benefits section assists the family members of the officer killed or disabled in the line of duty with filing for the various benefits they are eligible to receive.<sup>67</sup>

Figure 14. Kansas City Police Department Death Benefits

<b>Federal Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act of 1976</li><li>•Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act of 2003</li></ul>
<b>State of Missouri Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Various</li></ul>
<b>Organization Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Kansas City Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 99</li><li>•Missouri Peace Officers Association</li><li>•Surviving Spouse and Family Endowment Fund</li></ul>

<sup>65</sup> Kansas City Missouri Police Department, *Kansas City Missouri Police Department Personnel Policy, Policy Series 900: General 937—Formal Funeral Plan* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Missouri Police Department, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Darryl Forté, *Kansas City Missouri Police Department Personnel Policy, Policy Series 1000: Benefits, 1008—Line of Duty Death and Disability Benefits for Officers* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Missouri Police Department, 2012).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 2.

The three line of duty death policies of the Kansas City Police Department total 14 pages. The *Employee Assistance Program* policy is only two pages and is more of a guide to locate useful resources. The *Formal Funeral Plan* policy is 10 pages in length and consists of logistical details defining specific assignments required for the funeral planning after a line of duty death. The *Line of Duty Death and Disability Benefits for Officers* policy is also two pages and serves as a benefits list and identifies who is responsible for assisting the family members with their applications and forms. These combined policies are inclusive of what is necessary to meet the KCPD needs and contains details to assist those left behind.

#### **D. NORMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT (OKLAHOMA)**

Norman is the third largest city in Oklahoma with a population of 118,040 (see Figures 15 and 16).<sup>68</sup> It covers an area of 178.76 square miles and was once a railway headquarters for passenger and freight transportation.<sup>69</sup> Norman is the home to the first university in the state, University of Oklahoma, and is a forward thinking city. This progressive thinking is clear in the Norman 2025 plan, which is the current plan in place to address the anticipated increase in population of the city.<sup>70</sup>

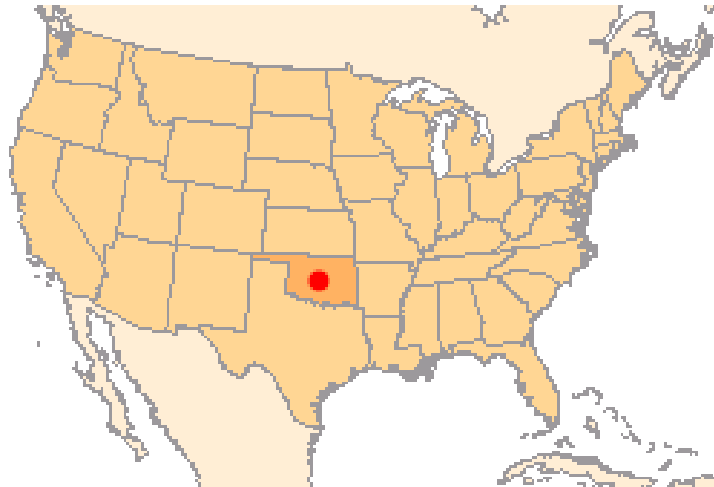
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<sup>68</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, Norman, OK," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 24, 2014, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/40/4052500.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

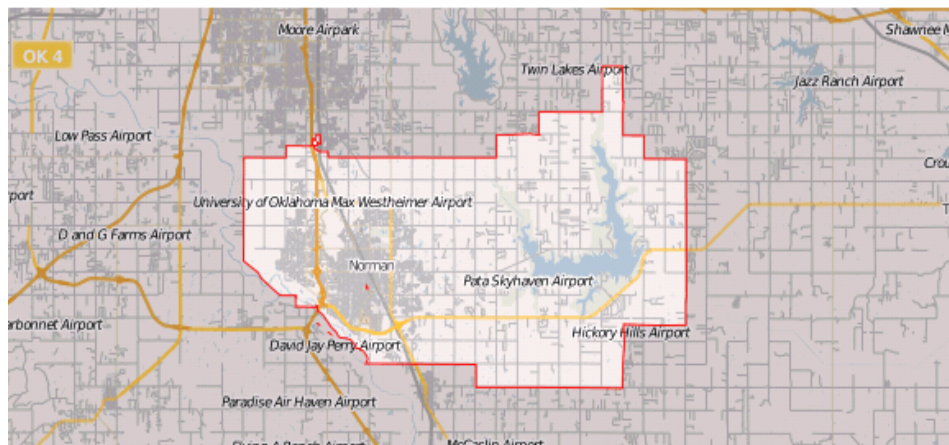
<sup>70</sup> Norman Future Committee, *Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan: Adoption Draft* (draft, City of Norman, Norman, OK, 2004).

Figure 15. Map of the United States, State of Oklahoma, Located in the Midwestern United States



Source: Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v., "Norman, Oklahoma," accessed August 9, 2015, <https://www.wolframalpha.com/Norman,Oklahoma>.

Figure 16. Map of Norman, Oklahoma



Source: Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v., "Norman, Oklahoma."

The Norman Police Department (NPD) was established in 1919<sup>71</sup> and currently has an authorized strength of 173 officers and 60 civilians.<sup>72</sup> In its 96 years of existence, NPD has experienced three line of duty deaths over the

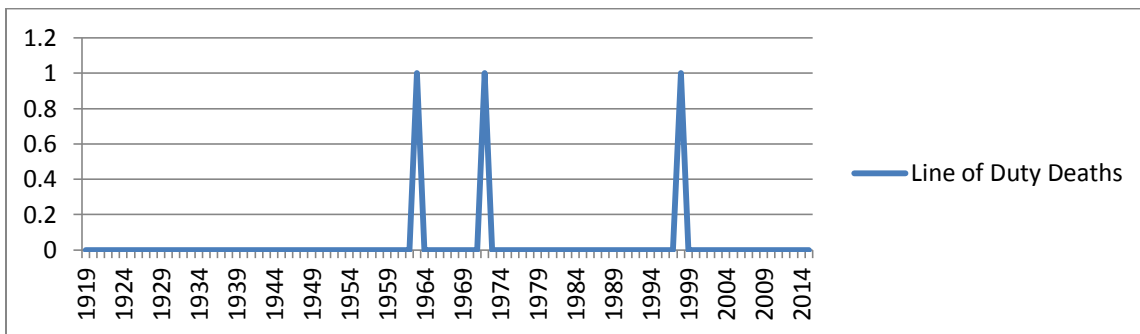
<sup>71</sup> "Norman Police, History," Norman Police Department, accessed August 30, 2015, <http://normanpd.normanok.gov/pd/history>.

<sup>72</sup> Chris Kostelac, *Benchmark City Survey: 2013 Data* (Overland Park, KS: A Coalition for Mutual Support, 2013), 40.



course of a 35-year period (see Figure 17). This is a very low number, and each had a different cause of death. The first line of duty death in 1963, 44 years after NPD was formed, was that of a lieutenant. He had been with the department for five years and died after being ejected from his vehicle after another vehicle turned in front of him. The second officer killed was nine years later in 1972. He was a 25-year old officer, who had only been on the department for six months and had traded days off to help out a fellow officer. He was shot by a suspect, who fled after he shot and killed his parents. The third line of duty death at Norman Police Department was 26 years later in 1998; a sergeant suffered a fatal heart attack while performing routine physical exercises as part of the physical fitness program.<sup>73</sup>

Figure 17. Norman, Oklahoma, Line of Duty Deaths 1919–2015



Adapted from Norman Police, History," Norman Police Department.

The Norman Police Department has a line of duty death policy that is 13 pages long and includes a detailed benefits and assistance summary. NPD's policy, in effect since 1999, has been revised four times; the most recent revision was in November 2008. The first sentence of its policy states the department is to "provide appropriate emotional care for the seriously injured, ill or deceased employees' family."<sup>74</sup> The policy further states that the funeral details are based

<sup>73</sup> "Norman Police, History," Norman Police Department.

<sup>74</sup> Phil Cotten, *Line of Duty Death Policy* (Norman, OK: Norman Police Department, 2008), 2.

on the wishes of the family of the deceased and take precedence over the wishes of the department.<sup>75</sup>

The Norman Police Department policy statement starts like policy statements from other departments, by listing definitions for LODD, survivors, beneficiaries, and a few others. One of the first tasks following a LODD is for the chief of police to designate an officer in charge (OIC). The OIC is responsible for coordinating all efforts pertaining to the incident, and no department employees is permitted to take any action without the OIC approval. The OIC is responsible for appointing personnel to coordinate the Peer Support Unit (PSU), critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) and honor guard.<sup>76</sup>

The policy states that those responsible for funeral related tasks will be temporarily relieved from their usual job tasks. These individuals may be required to obtain a “fit for duty” evaluation from a mental healthcare professional prior to returning to their previous duty assignment. This is an acknowledgment of the emotional difficulty of coping with a line of duty death.

The next sections of the policy give instructions for notifying family and other officers as well as assisting the family at the hospital. The NPD is very specific regarding who is to make the notification and certain phrases that should be used and not used when speaking with the family. While the policy has an ideal notification policy, it recognizes the importance of timeliness and the needs of the family. An emergency department liaison (EDL) is appointed by the OIC to facilitate information to and from the family and hospital staff. This position is unique because it emphasizes the significance of the human factor. In addition, there is instructional information regarding any benefits available to the survivors, providing support for the family during the funeral, during legal proceedings, and

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 3.

extended emotional support. Furthermore, there is an appendix that gives specific contact information for the many resources available.<sup>77</sup>

This policy clearly meets the needs of the Norman Police Department and is recognized as a best practice by Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) and many other law enforcement agencies around the country. The fact that NPD has only experienced three line of duty deaths, which is an extremely low number for its 96 years of existence, has not stifled its ability to have a comprehensive and all-inclusive policy. This shows that agencies do not have to be met with multiple deaths to be prepared. This is an example of the Norman Police Department as part of a forward-thinking city taking a proactive approach to addressing a difficult subject. There are other agencies that have experienced a relatively small number of line of duty deaths that have chosen avoidance instead of facing the probability of a recurrence and being prepared. Norman Police Department undoubtedly is not one of these agencies.

## **E. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

California is the most populous state in the United States with 38.8 million residents,<sup>78</sup> and it is the third largest state, covering 155,779 square land miles (see Figure 18).<sup>79</sup> The state has more than 46,500 miles of interconnected highways and is known to have heavy traffic.<sup>80</sup> The California Highway Patrol (CHP) was created on August 14, 1929, with its initial responsibility “to enforce traffic laws on county and State highways.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>78</sup> “Florida Passes New York to Become the Nation’s Third Most Populous State, Census Bureau Reports” (release number: CB14-232), December 23, 2014, accessed August 24, 2015, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2014/cb14-232.html>.

<sup>79</sup> “State & County QuickFacts, California,” U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 30, 2014, accessed August 29, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html>.

<sup>80</sup> “California Celebrates 50 Years of the Interstate Highway System,” California Department of Transportation, accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.dot.ca.gov/interstate/>.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Figure 18. Map of California and the Western United States



Adapted from Wolfram and Alpha Knowledgebase, s.v., “California,” accessed August 12, <http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=map%20of%20california>.

Over the years, CHP’s span of control has expanded along with its level of responsibilities. In 1995, the range of responsibility of the California Highway Patrol grew when it merged with the California State Police.<sup>82</sup> Currently, CHP has 10,623 employees with 7,236 sworn law enforcement officers,<sup>83</sup> and it operates out of 94 substations, not including the commercial vehicle and communication centers (see Figure 19).

<sup>82</sup> “The History of the California Highway Patrol,” California Highway Patrol, accessed October 7, 2015, <https://www.chp.ca.gov/home/about-us/the-history-of-the-california-highway-patrol>.

<sup>83</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Table 76: Fulltime State Law Enforcement Employees, by State, 2013* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013).

Figure 19. California Highway Patrol Divisions



Source: "CHP Divisions," Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2015, <https://www.chp.ca.gov/find-an-office>.

The state of California has lost 1,564 law enforcement officers in the line of duty,<sup>84</sup> and the California Highway Patrol has lost 225 in its 85 years of existence. The first CHP line of duty death was an officer killed in a motorcycle crash in 1929, and the most recent were two officers killed in a vehicle crash in February 2014.<sup>85</sup> A tragedy, known as the Newhall Incident, took place April 6, 1970. This catastrophe left the California Highway Patrol, many families and the nation mourning the death of four young law enforcement officers following a fatal gun battle. Two officers stopped a vehicle that was reported as having an

<sup>84</sup> “Law Enforcement Facts,” National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

<sup>85</sup> “Memorials,” California Highway Patrol, accessed October 7, 2015, <https://www.chp.ca.gov/home/about-us/memorial>.

occupant with a weapon. As the officers approached the stopped vehicle; two occupants exited, began shooting and both officers were shot and killed instantly. Two additional officers arrived and began taking on gunfire immediately. One officer was able to call for assistance before engaging in the gun battle. Although one suspect was shot, both officers were fatally wounded. After a nine-hour manhunt, one of the suspects took his own life, and the second was apprehended and convicted of four counts of murder. This gun battle lasted four and a half minutes; however, the impact was felt for much longer. The incident “left four women widows and seven children, ranging in age from 9 months to 4 years, without fathers.”<sup>86</sup> The California Highway Patrol website describes:

The tremor that rolled through the CHP—and in fact, all law enforcement—spoke of grief for lost comrades and their suffering families, of organizational concern with the urgency of rethinking high-risk stop procedures, of humility imposed by such a catastrophic event, and then, the iron resolve to prevent a reoccurrence.<sup>87</sup>

Emotions ran high during the investigation of this incident, which led to blame and finger pointing within the CHP. Subsequently, this disaster was the catalyst that put new officer safety measures into practice and “completely revamped” how high risk and felony traffic stops were approached.<sup>88</sup> This was a tragic event, and procedure changes were put into place to prevent such a thing from happening again. However, addressing the resiliency and wellness of the employees was still necessary.

The CHP family has faced many other tragedies with multiple deaths on the same day and numerous deaths each year. In fact in 1964, the CHP experienced eight deaths. There were seven deaths in 1970 and 1978. Throughout its 85 years, there have only been 11 years without any deaths.

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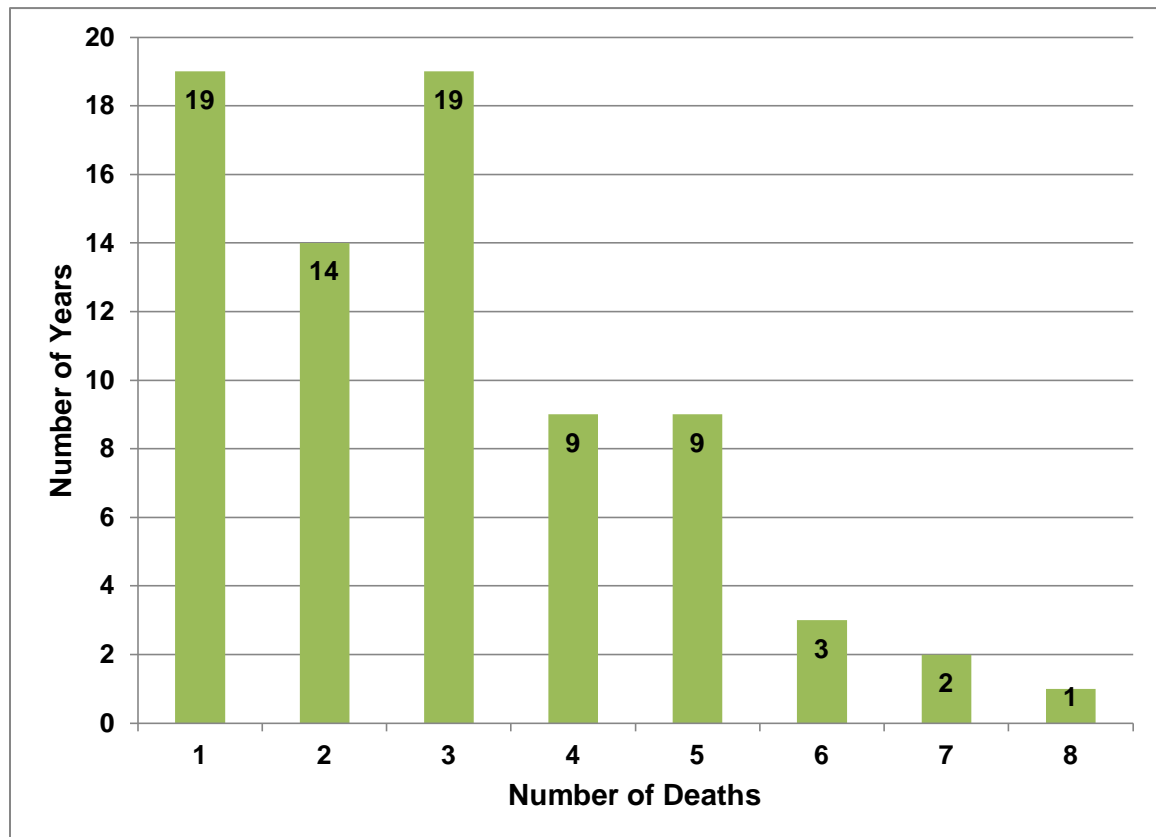
<sup>86</sup> “The Newhall Incident,” California Highway Patrol, accessed October 7, 2015, <https://www.chp.ca.gov/home/about-us/the-history-of-the-california-highway-patrol/milestones-in-time/the-newhall-incident>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

From 1948 to 1949 and from 1983 to 1984 are the only times when there were two consecutive years without any deaths. Figure 20 illustrates the frequency that the California Highway Patrol has encountered multiple deaths per year. This has led to the agency becoming extremely resilient and proactive when faced with line of duty deaths.<sup>89</sup>

Figure 20. California Highway Patrol, Line of Duty Deaths, Years with Multiple Deaths



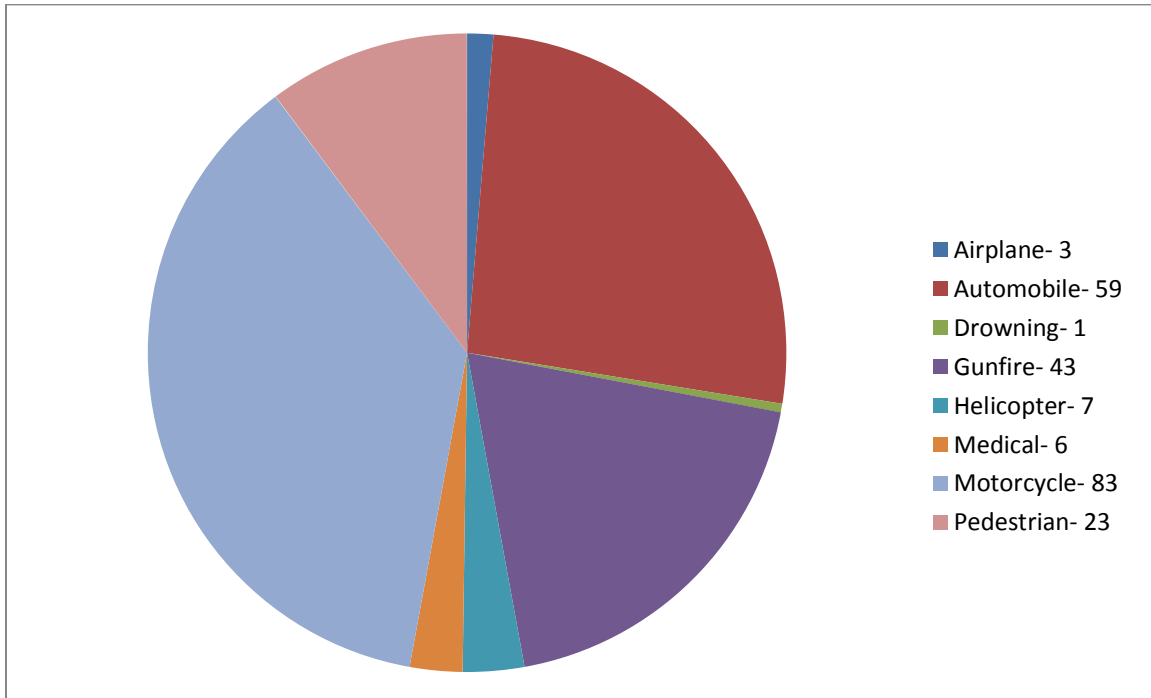
Adapted from "Memorials," California Highway Patrol.

The large number and frequency of line of duty deaths experienced by the California Highway Patrol has contributed to the lengthy and detailed manual it currently has in place. Figure 21 shows how the 225 officer deaths occurred. Of

<sup>89</sup> "Memorials," California Highway Patrol.

the line of duty death policies analyzed, this is the most comprehensive. The manual is 172 pages and consists of 11 chapters; each chapter dedicated to a separate area of focus.

Figure 21. CHP Line of Duty Deaths



Adapted from "Memorials," California Highway Patrol. Note, 68 percent of CHP LODD are transportation related, either automobile, motorcycle, airplane or helicopter.

The first chapter of the CHP manual, *Highway Patrol Handbook: Guide to Employee Death* addresses the purpose of the policy. It states, "The tragedy of these events can be mitigated through compassion and efficient handling."<sup>90</sup> The manual emphasizes consistent standards and having a plan of action that is accessible when needed by supervisory personnel; however, the wishes of the family are of primary concern. This manual addresses a number of subjects: policies, guidelines and information on administrative roles, notifications, incident

<sup>90</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 1: Introduction," in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13): Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007), 1-3.



management, procedures, assistance, memorials, and available benefits and support groups. The objective of the manual is to establish roles and responsibilities, and, unlike any other policy analyzed, it references fiscal responsibility. The responsibilities section defines who is assigned each task and designates who is authorized to institute policy changes.<sup>91</sup>

The next chapter is dedicated to memorial service planning guidelines. This section starts by clearly defining a line of duty death and differentiating between each segment of employment covered under these guidelines (see Table 1). This policy specifies the level of departmental participation permitted for each type of death and addresses the department's right to refuse involvement under certain circumstances, such as an officer with pending criminal charges or those under criminal investigation. This section also includes a sample condolence letter and checklist of information needed to plan the funeral services as well as a list of important resources.<sup>92</sup>

Table 1. Types of Funeral Services

Line of duty death
Active uniformed employee off duty death
Honorable retired uniformed employee
Active non uniformed employee or volunteer
Honorably retired non uniformed employee
Employee suicide
Departmental animals in law enforcement service

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 2: Memorial Service Planning," in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13): Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

The third chapter doles out responsibilities to command staff based on their current assignment. Some of the responsibilities assigned include: drafting and publishing communications for flying the flag at half-staff, articles for published communications (e.g., “badges of honor”), press releases, completing NLEOMF paperwork, vetting the qualification of personnel for inclusion on the state and national memorials, and pertinent legal and employment documentation.<sup>93</sup>

Chapter four of the manual deals specifically with notifications. It discusses the importance of timely notification to family and co-workers prior to social media or news outlets releasing information. There are instructions given regarding non-traditional relationships and proper notification for these situations. The *Instructions in the Event of Death* form provides personal information of the deceased employee to aid with funeral services and final wishes, and this form is made accessible at the time of death. When there is a situation where an employee has a non-traditional relationship or one that does not meet the approval of the employee’s family, the commander is advised to be sensitive when dealing with all involved parties and be aware that non-traditional partners may be entitled to certain benefits. Additional details describe precise hospital duties, which include two uniformed officers guarding the body of the deceased officer at all times and having peer support or mental health professionals present. The policy also mentions the importance viewing the body by family members to help them accept what has happened. This can be vital and should be done carefully with regard to the condition of the body. This chapter concludes with notification checklists, copies of forms, and dialogue samples for communicating the notifications.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 3: Administrative Roles in Line of Duty Deaths,” in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13): Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

<sup>94</sup> California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 4: Notifications,” in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13) - Guide to Employee Death* - (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

Chapters five and six of the manual review forms and assistance respectively. The *Incident Command Guide* outlined in chapter five, gives section assignment for LODD management including areas of responsibility and all necessary checklists.<sup>95</sup> The sixth chapter focuses on acquiring additional resources from within the agency, the role of peer support, EAP, CISD, memorial funds, and survivor issues. This chapter also ensures that survivors are aware of the Survivor Outreach Program (SOP). This is a program designed to maintain law enforcement contact indefinitely at the level desired by the family of the fallen officer.<sup>96</sup> This contact includes inviting the family to department functions, memorial services, and has a plan of action should the family relocate.

The seventh chapter covers the detailed logistics of funeral planning. This chapter gives the protocol for the guidelines referenced in chapter five. It is a very in depth chapter covering a wide range of logistics with specific instructions regarding: the initial planning, viewing/vigil, scheduling of memorial services, seating arrangements, VIP accommodations, religious service protocols, processions, graveside, LODD presentations, reception, and media participation. This chapter also includes a list of potential dignitary attendees and their protocol, minute-by-minute order of service and sample funeral timelines.<sup>97</sup>

Chapter eight is an inclusive compilation of benefits available to the survivors. It goes beyond the standard LODD benefits and covers education, scholarships, social security, and veteran benefits.<sup>98</sup> Chapters nine, 10 and 11 cover memorials, support groups, and understanding grief. The section on memorials outlines the various options available and information required to

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<sup>95</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 5: Line of Duty Incident Management," in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13): Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

<sup>96</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 6: Assistance," in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13) - Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 7: Funeral Planning," in *Highway Patrol Manual (HPM 10.13), Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

<sup>98</sup> California Highway Patrol, "Chapter 8: Benefits," in *Highway Patrol Handbook (HPH 10.13): Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

commemorate the life of the officer. The chapter concentrating on support groups (chapter 10) is a directory of current support groups to help survivors cope and establish relationships to assist in navigating through the grieving process. The section on grief discusses expectations and signs of grief that survivors may experience. It lists signs of depression, guilt, and the effects of sudden death.<sup>99</sup>

Aside from the CHP LODD manual, CHP also has an extensive Employee Assistance Program and critical incident stress debriefing policy, which follows the Mitchell model. The Mitchell model is defined by Jeffrey Mitchell as, “A specific 7-step group crisis intervention tool designed to assist a homogeneous group of people after an exposure to the same significant traumatic event.”<sup>100</sup> New employees are introduced to services available through the EAP the day they are hired. Upon academy graduation, a letter is sent to their home from the Office of Employee Safety and Assistance Unit. This letter emphasizes the importance of their overall wellness and is a reminder of the benefits of the EAP.

The *Highway Patrol Handbook: Guide to Employee Death* is the most extensive and detailed law enforcement policy analyzed in this chapter. CHP’s policy gives very specific instructions from types of death to seating charts at funeral services. Experiencing 225 deaths over an 85-year span<sup>101</sup> has placed CHP in a position to be at the forefront of preparedness and spotlighting resiliency. The California Highway Patrol handbook encapsulates the need for agency preparedness.

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<sup>99</sup> California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 9: Memorials,” in *Highway Patrol Manual (HPM 10.13), Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007); California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 10: Support Groups,” *Highway Patrol Manual (HPM 10.13), Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007); California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 11: Understanding Grief,” in *Highway Patrol Manual (HPM 10.13), Guide to Employee Death* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007).

<sup>100</sup> Jeffrey T. Mitchell, *Crisis Intervention and Critical Incident Stress Management: A Defense of the Field* (Baltimore, MD: International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc., 2004), 4.

<sup>101</sup> “Memorials,” California Highway Patrol.

## F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has analyzed the policies of five law enforcement agencies regarding line of duty deaths. The policies range from two pages in length to 172 pages. Experience with line of duty deaths vary from an agency that has never had an officer death in 45 years to one agency losing 225 officers over 85 years (see Table 2). Each policy specifies procedures regarding logistics and each places an emphasis on care and support of the survivors. Some of the policies specify what qualifies as a line of duty death and who is considered next of kin, while other policies delineate between employment classifications. All of these policies not only stress notification of survivors, but they outline it in detail. Employee assistance programs were also noted as a tool to assist in the event of an LODD at some of the agencies. Although the line of duty death policies analyzed vary in length and level of detail, acknowledging their importance or validity of having a policy in place helps to prepare an agency for the needed resiliency in the event of a death. The next chapter analyzes another profession, the fire service, which is also effected by line of duty death.

Table 2. Summary of Analyzed Law Enforcement Agency Statistics

Agency	# of years established	# of line of duty deaths	# of officers	Avg deaths per year
Amtrak Police Department	45	0	488	0
Virginia State Police	96	61	1,987	.625
Kansas City Police Department	141	119	1,438	.843
Norman Police Department	96	3	173	.030
California Highway Patrol	85	225	7,236	2.647

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## IV. FIRE DEPARTMENTS POLICY ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a description of three important fire departments and their policies regarding line of duty deaths, specifically, the policies of Colorado Springs Fire Department, Long Beach Fire Department, and Charlotte Fire Department. These fire departments were selected because of their size, the number of years they have been operational, and measurable values of differences in their policies. Each fire department has been in existence for more than 115 years and has over 450 firefighters. By the standards of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the 100 largest fire departments in the United States have 350 or more fulltime firefighters.<sup>102</sup> Each of these three fire departments has experienced at least four line of duty deaths, and they each have a policy in place to assist employees and families in the event of a line of duty death.

Law enforcement is not the only career field that faces line of duty deaths. Firefighting is another profession where people put their lives at risk to save the lives of others. The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch website describes the beginnings of firefighting in this country, even before it was a country:

After a major fire in Boston in 1631, the first fire regulation in America was established. In 1648 in New Amsterdam (now New York) fire wardens were appointed, thereby establishing the beginnings of the first public fire department in North America.<sup>103</sup>

The modern fire department varies in its structure from location to location. It was in the late nineteenth century when many fire departments took on their

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<sup>102</sup> Marlene H. Dortch, *Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements: PS Docket no. 07-114 [Letter to Tom Wheeler, Chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission]* (Louisville, KY: IAFC/NFPA Metropolitan, Fire Chiefs Association, 2014), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7521386733>.

<sup>103</sup> "History of Fire Fighting," International Academies of Emergency Dispatch, accessed October 7, 2015, <https://www.emergencydispatch.org/articles/historyoffirefighting.html>.

current look with the use of standardized equipment.<sup>104</sup> Many smaller communities often depend on volunteer firefighters to staff many of their personnel roles. Larger cities, which often hire firefighters, refer to their paid firefighters as career firefighters.<sup>105</sup> The various categories of firefighters include: volunteer, career, paid-on-call, paid part-time, wildland fulltime, wildland part-time, wildland contract, and industrial. Some departments have the dual role of firefighter and police officer.

Karter Jr. notes an astonishing statistic, “In 2013 public fire departments in the United States responded to 1,240,000 fires.”<sup>106</sup> The National Fire Protection Association reveals, “On average, a fire department responded to a fire every 25 seconds, a structure fire every 65 seconds, an outside fire every 56 seconds and a vehicle fire every 167 seconds.”<sup>107</sup> These numbers show the stark reality and magnitude of dangers and risks involved with firefighting. In 2013, “three incidents alone claimed a total of 32 lives,” and there was a single incident that claimed the lives of 22 firefighters.<sup>108</sup> Firefighter deaths in the United States decreased from 97 in 2013 to 64 in 2014.<sup>109</sup> Of the 64 line of duty deaths in 2014, 36 (or 56 percent) were caused by sudden cardiac death. Another leading cause of death for firefighters is vehicle road crashes (see Figure 22).<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Michael J. Karter Jr., “Fire Loss in the United States during 2013,” *NFPA Journal* (September–October 2014), <http://www.nfpa.org/newsandpublications/nfpa-journal/2014/september-october-2014/features/2013-fire-loss>.

<sup>107</sup> National Fire Protection Association, *An Overview of the U.S. Fire Problem* (Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

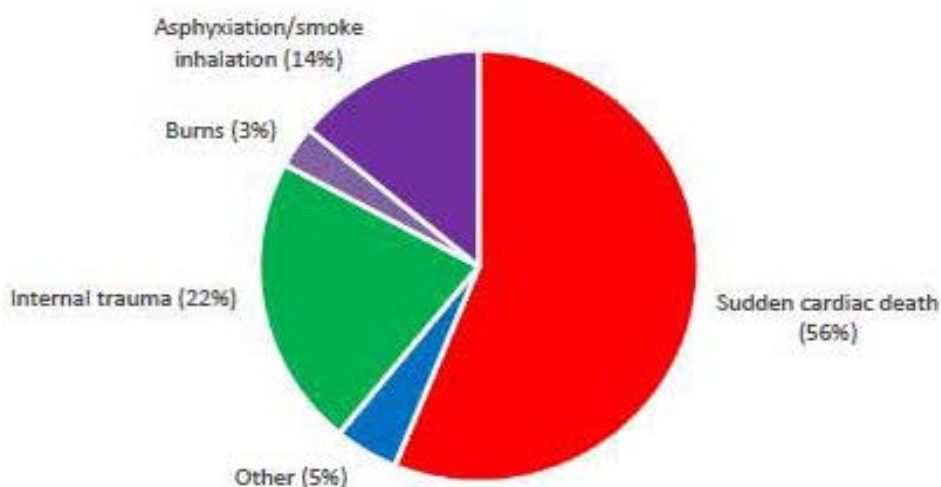
<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.



Figure 22. Firefighter Deaths by Nature of Injury, 2014



Source: "Firefighter Fatalities in the United States," National Fire Protection Association, accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.nfpa.org/research/reports-and-statistics/the-fire-service/fatalities-and-injuries/firefighter-fatalities-in-the-united-states>.

#### A. COLORADO SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT (COLORADO)

The city of Colorado Springs was settled as a resort in 1871 by General William Jackson Palmer, just a few years after he founded Denver and the Rio Grande Railroad.<sup>111</sup> Today, the population of Colorado Springs is 445,830, and it is the second largest city in Colorado covering 194.54 square miles.<sup>112</sup> The Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) has been serving the city since February 12, 1894, when it began with one station and six staff members.<sup>113</sup> It currently has 21 fire stations, 468 fulltime employees, operates 21 engine companies, six truck companies, one Hazmat Response Team, one Heavy

<sup>111</sup> "Colorado Springs History & Heritage," Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau, accessed October 7, 2015, <http://www.visitcos.com/colorado-springs/travel/history-heritage>.

<sup>112</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, Colorado Springs, CO," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 24, 2015, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/08/0816000.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Colorado Springs Fire Department, *Colorado Springs Fire Department Strategic Plan 2012–2016* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado Springs Fire Department, 2012), 5.

Recue Team, and two medical squads.<sup>114</sup> In its 121-year history, CSFD has experienced four line of duty deaths; one in each of the following years: 1918, 1922, 1926, and 2004.

Colorado Springs Fire Department has a line of duty death manual, which is an 80-page document containing explicit instructions from funeral flowcharts to benefits coordination. Part of this manual is a “Funeral Plan Packet,” which each employee of the Colorado Springs Fire Department completes upon hire and is required to keep updated throughout her or his career with CSFD. In this packet, each employee designates a contact person to assist with notification and to assist his or her family should the employee be killed in the line of duty. CSFD also has a *Line of Duty Serious Injury or Death and Funeral Policy* that was created in 1995 and updated in 2012.<sup>115</sup> The purpose of the policy is to provide notification procedures and guidelines for family support. The policy establishes standards for active and inactive members and notes the importance of family needs and to explain the cause of death. The procedures specify that it is necessary to provide “ongoing emotional and spiritual support for the next of kin.”<sup>116</sup> There is significant emphasis placed on the next of kin notification procedure. This includes designating the Survivor Action Team to coordinate everything from the survivor notifications to the funeral planning and family support.

The Survivor Action Team consists of department individuals who are assigned various duties. Their responsibilities vary a great deal and include coordinating with the hospital staff, assisting with funeral plans, providing support to other fire department employees, arranging lodging for out of town family members, notifying police agencies, and extending post-funeral family assistance.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>115</sup> City of Colorado Springs, *Colorado Springs Fire Department Policies and Procedures: Line of Duty Serious Injury or Death and Funeral* (Colorado Springs, CO: City of Colorado Springs Fire Department, 2012).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 1.

The CSFD policy also includes tasks for the International Association Fire Fighters (IAFF) union local representatives.<sup>117</sup> Founded in 1918, the IAFF union represents over 300,000 fulltime firefighters and paramedics.<sup>118</sup> The fire department chaplain has assigned duties and plays a critical role in assuring certain aspects of the incident are managed properly. For instance, the chaplain is involved from the very beginning as part of the notification process and through the end as one of the remaining parties responsible for assisting the family in the aftercare, which can extend long after the funeral.

The Colorado Springs Fire Department LODD manual is the most detailed fire department policy analyzed in this chapter. Its manual consists of a detailed 10-page policy directive and nine-page “Funeral Plan Packet.” The manual addresses many of the same topics included in the law enforcement line of duty death policies. The manual covers logistics; however, it clearly states that its purpose is to also minister to the emotional needs of the survivors. As an agency that has experienced four line of duty deaths in 121 years of existence, this policy sufficiently provides what is needed to assist in coping with a line of duty death.

## **B. LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT (CALIFORNIA)**

The city of Long Beach was settled in 1784; however, it was not incorporated until 1888.<sup>119</sup> It is located in Los Angeles County, in the southwest portion of California, covering 50.29 square miles of land and has a population of 473,577.<sup>120</sup> After a series of uncontrollable fires, the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) was established in March of 1897.<sup>121</sup> The LBFD now

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>118</sup> “About Us,” International Association Fire Fighters, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://client.prod.iaff.org/#page=AboutUs>.

<sup>119</sup> “Long Beach History Timeline,” Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau, accessed September 12, 2015, <http://www.visitlongbeach.com/visitors/about/facts-history/>.

<sup>120</sup> “State & County QuickFacts, Long Beach, CA,” United States Census Bureau, last modified September 24, 2015, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0643000.html>.

<sup>121</sup> “Long Beach Fire Department History: the Early Years,” Long Beach, California, accessed September 12, 2015, <http://www.longbeach.gov/fire/department-history/>.

operates with over 500 employees and from 24 stations. Over the past 118 years, Long Beach Fire Department has experienced 16 line of duty deaths.<sup>122</sup>

The Long Beach Fire Department has a 45-page *Line of Duty Death Contingency Plan*.<sup>123</sup> The introduction of the plan acknowledges that a line of duty death is both tragic for the survivors at the fire department and the family of the deceased member. The department recognizes the prudence of the plan and the hope that it will never need the policy. According to the LBFD, “The following five areas are addressed in the LBFD plan: notifications, planning, execution of services, death investigation and after care.”<sup>124</sup> The department realizes line of duty deaths are unexpected and the chief and command staff is instructed to have the policy manual readily available in their department vehicles. The chief is responsible for putting the plan into practice; however, it may be necessary for an assistant chief or deputy chief to initiate the plan should the chief be unavailable.<sup>125</sup> When there is a LODD, the timeliness of putting a plan of action in place is paramount, and this policy emphasizes the importance of moving quickly and not delaying, specifically with the notifications. The fire chief is also responsible for verifying the needed critical incident stress management (CISM) is in place and operational.<sup>126</sup>

The *Long Beach Fire Department Contingency Plan* states that a line of duty death will be managed by the Incident Command System (ICS). The United States Department of Labor defines ICS as “a standardized on-scene incident management concept designed specifically to allow responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any single incident or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional

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<sup>122</sup> California Fire Foundation, *California Firefighters Memorial Names by Wall Order* (Sacramento, CA: California Fire Foundation, 2015).

<sup>123</sup> Long Beach Fire Department, *Long Beach Fire Department, Line-of-Duty Death Contingency Plan* (Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Fire Department).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

boundaries.”<sup>127</sup> The first step of the LBFD plan is the appointment of the planning group manager (PGM) by the fire chief. Once the PGM is designated, the fire chief’s secretary provides this individual with the line of duty death container, which contains notebooks for the lead person of each team that will be formed.<sup>128</sup> The LBFD *Line-of-Duty Death Contingency Plan* notes, “The teams formed are the logistic group, viewing/vigil division, memorial service division, interment division, reception division, family liaison officer and public information group.”<sup>129</sup> These roles are vital for moving forward with the funeral planning. The PGM arranges an initial meeting with all of the leaders as soon as practical to distribute the notebooks and begin the planning process. Meetings are then held twice daily to keep everyone informed and the planning running smoothly.<sup>130</sup>

The LBFD notification section provides instructions for notifying a fallen firefighter’s family members who are not nearby. The plan states that it is preferential to contact the local fire department where the family resides and to request its assistance with the notification. The notification process is very specific and includes such directions as not to notify at the door, make sure the correct person is notified and they are in a comfortable position, to have paramedics nearby, and to use appropriate predetermined language. The policy also states that the messengers should not leave immediately following the notification, and a support system should be established and on-scene prior to their departure. The family members should also be assured that their desires take priority over the needs of the department.<sup>131</sup>

The designated teams each have assigned responsibilities. The public information group’s responsibilities include servings as the liaison with many local and national media entities and working with the notification group. Since

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<sup>127</sup> “What is an Incident Command System?” Occupational Safety and Health Administration, accessed October 7, 2015, [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/what\\_is\\_ics.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/what_is_ics.html).

<sup>128</sup> Long Beach Fire Department, *Line-of-Duty Death Contingency Plan*, 4.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

the increase of social media usage, the role of notification team has become more vital. It is imperative that this group maintains the confidentiality of the name of the fallen firefighter until proper notification is made to family members.<sup>132</sup>

The team responsible for the planning and execution of services have detailed procedures addressing the venue, program protocol, traffic concerns, VIP seating, participating apparatus, media involvement, communication with clergy, mortuary personnel, other fire departments, police departments, and union officials. Sample programs, lists of presentations, checklists and numerous guides to assist in the planning are also the responsibility of the team. The policy also mentions collecting the officially issued equipment of the fallen firefighter for inspection and emphasizes the importance of making the family aware of the legally required autopsy.<sup>133</sup> Depending on the method of death, the involvement of other agencies may also be necessary as part of the death investigation.

The final section of the LBFD contingency plan focuses on the aftercare of the family. This section reiterates the magnitude of the loss and requests the family be treated as a part of the fire department family. The aftercare of the family may last for an extended period of time. Some of the responsibilities for those assisting the family may include the completion of benefit forms, reviewing of bills, assisting with banking, arranging grief counseling, referrals to support groups, and inclusion in future fire department gatherings. The plan emphasizes the importance of maintaining an ongoing relationship with the family. A unique section of the LBFD plan is the acknowledgement that some family members may look for someone to blame and point fingers at those making the notification or at the department. If this occurs, it is possible that the family may deny the LBFD any involvement with memorial planning. If this takes place, the family should be advised that although their wishes will be respected, the members of

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

the department will need to grieve and work toward closure. In this case, the department will plan a separate service to memorialize the fallen firefighter.<sup>134</sup>

*The Long Beach Fire Department Line of Duty Death Contingency Plan* stresses the importance of those assisting with planning being organized and acting quickly to make sure the process is as smooth as possible, starting with the notification. One significant aspect of the plan is the forethought to have the pertinent documents available at all times should a line of duty death occur. This portion of the plan demonstrates a clear understanding of the need for immediate action following a line of duty death. The LBFD has a clearly defined plan of action to suit the needs of its department ready to implement when faced with a line of duty death.

### **C. CHARLOTTE FIRE DEPARTMENT (NORTH CAROLINA)**

Charlotte, North Carolina, has a population of 809,958 and is 297.68 square miles.<sup>135</sup> According to the city's website, "The city was founded in 1768 and named after Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III of England."<sup>136</sup> Although there were records of fire services dating back to 1845, the Charlotte Fire Department (CFD) was officially created in 1875.<sup>137</sup> In addition, the Charlotte Fire Department currently operates with 1,027 firefighters utilizing 42 fire stations,<sup>138</sup> and it has two heavy rescue companies, four hazardous material companies, six fire and rescue aircraft, a dive team, three urban search and rescue teams, one fire boat, and one dive rescue boat.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> "State & County QuickFacts, Charlotte, NC," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified September 24, 2014, accessed August 9, 2015, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/3712000.html>.

<sup>136</sup> "Charlotte History: Discover the Fascinating History of Charlotte, North Carolina," accessed September 24, 2015, <http://www.charlottesgotalot.com/charlotte-history>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> "History of CFD," Charlotte Fire Department, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://charmec.org/city/charlotte/Fire/About%20Us/Pages/Default.aspx>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

Charlotte Fire Department has experienced 12 line of duty deaths in its 140 years of existence. CFD has two general orders and five standard operating guidelines in place to assist with line of duty deaths; these were established in September 2000. The first general order is a one-page directive titled *Taking Care of Our Own: Pre-Incident Planning*, and the second is a two-page form titled *Employee Emergency Contact Information*. The directive states that the CFD is to be prepared for an unexpected tragedy and have a quick and compassionate response. When this policy was implemented, each employee was required to complete two copies of the *Employee Emergency Contact Information* form. For each year after implementation, the form is to be updated annually at the time of each employee's performance appraisal. The form contains general demographics, as well as family contact information and specific desires regarding notifications in the event of a line of duty death.<sup>140</sup>

The first standard operating guideline is titled *Funeral Services for Deceased Members*, a two-page document. This document addresses funeral guidelines for active and retired personnel and includes uniformed and civilian employees. The policy specifies protocol regarding seating, honor guard involvement, saluting, and logistics for the command staff and dignitaries in attendance.

The second standard operating guideline is titled *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) Program*. The purpose of this program is to provide support and minimize stress following a critical incident. The CFD recognizes the importance of reducing stress specifically related to first responders and uses the regional Critical Incident Stress Management Team. This policy outlines the critical incident stress management model used by the CFD, which includes formal debriefing, defusing, one-on-one intervention, and on-scene responses. The debriefing method used by CFD is the Mitchell model, which was referenced earlier in the California Highway *Patrol Line of Duty Death Manual*. The CFD

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<sup>140</sup> Charlotte Fire Department, *General Order 208.3: Employee Emergency Contact Information* (Charlotte, NC: Charlotte Fire Department, 2000).



policy delineates which incidents require an automatic debriefing and those that are voluntary. A line of duty death or serious injury is listed as requiring a debriefing.<sup>141</sup>

The third standard operating guideline is a two-page directive titled *Firefighter Line of Duty Death/Serious Injury*. This guideline is logistical in nature and focuses on notification protocol, securing of the scene and equipment and application for benefits that may be needed. The fourth standard operating guideline is titled *Line of Duty Death Investigation*, a six-page form to be completed regarding the death. The information requested on the form includes:

- Deceased's demographic information
- Emergency contact information
- Notification checklist—who, by whom, when
- Initial investigation details
- Follow-up investigation details
- Supporting data details

The end of this form notes to keep a record of data received and released by the fire department.

The final standard operating guideline is a short form, less than a page, titled *Family Notification Outline*. This form does not give detailed instructions regarding how to notify, but it outlines collection demographic information of the deceased's family members. The form also allows a space to document who completed the notification, who she or he was accompanied by, what provisions were made for the family, and the contact information for the family's clergy.<sup>142</sup>

The Charlotte Fire Department policies pertaining to line of duty death are 17 pages in total. They are not very detailed; however, they clearly recognize a few important aspects of line of duty deaths. The policies emphasize timeliness

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<sup>141</sup> Charlotte Fire Department, *Standard Operating Guideline 608.1: Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Program* (Charlotte, NC: Charlotte Fire Department, 2000).

<sup>142</sup> Charlotte Fire Department, *Standard Operating Guideline 609.1D: Family Notification Outline* (Charlotte, NC: Charlotte Fire Department, 2000).

of notifications and the need for coping techniques. Timeliness is addressed by having employee information on hand prior to an incident occurring. The importance of mental well-being is acknowledged by having a regional CISM team in place to assist with the effects of line of duty deaths.<sup>143</sup>

#### **D. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter analyzes three fire departments in existence for at least 115 years and in the top 100 largest fire departments in the United States. While each has experienced line of duty deaths, their policies are different. Colorado Springs Fire Department was the most extensive policy analyzed, and its policy greatly emphasizes the notification aspect of line of duty deaths as well as being prepared prior to a line of duty death taking place. *The Long Beach Fire Department Contingency Plan* also places importance on being prepared and having a plan with quick and convenient access to it. The Charlotte Fire Department Policy also stresses action being taken in a timely fashion and having the proper information accessible to make timely notifications. Table 3 summarizes these departments' statistics.

Table 3. Summary of Fire Department Statistics

<b>Agency</b>	<b># of years established</b>	<b># of line of duty deaths</b>	<b># of pages in policy</b>
<b>Colorado Springs Fire Department</b>	121	4	80
<b>Long Beach Fire Department</b>	118	16	45
<b>Charlotte Fire Department</b>	140	12	17

These fire department line of duty death policies are applicable to law enforcement agencies as they also face unexpected deaths. Themes and action tasks derived from these policies have merit and can be implemented as policies and guidelines in law enforcement agencies for line of duty deaths. These and other fire department line of duty death policies have common themes that

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<sup>143</sup> Charlotte Fire Department, *Standard Operating Guideline 608.1*.

coincide with the law enforcement agency policies analyzed in Chapter III. The effective and proven practices used by fire departments described in this chapter and law enforcement agencies discussed in the previous chapter can be combined to create a viable policy that can be put into practice by agencies that do not currently have one.

In conclusion, I have shown that there is considerable value in examining policies regarding line of duty deaths developed by major firefighting departments. The last two chapters referenced resources that are available and utilized to assist in the event of a line of duty death. The next chapter identifies and summarizes the various elements of other available resources and their impact on line of duty death.

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## **V. AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

Knowing what resources are available and how to make the best use of them is a vital aspect of line of duty death preparation. Many agencies have been faced with line of duty deaths and as a result have reached out to locate useful resources. Some agencies have even taken the initiative and created resources based on needs. Employee assistance programs are the hub for resources and benefits to aid employees as they navigate through some of life's difficulties, many of which are brought on by work for first responders. Some of the prevalent resources that law enforcement agencies and fire departments are using to facilitate the process of line of duty deaths are chaplains, spiritual leaders, and peer to peer counselors. An organization mentioned in a previous chapter, Concerns of Police Survivors, has become an invaluable resource for many law enforcement agencies. This chapter discusses COPS and other resources available to law enforcement officers.

### **A. CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS**

When a law enforcement officer dies in the line of duty, it's too late for the department to try to figure out how to handle the death. It's too late to decide how to notify the family; too late to consider how to debrief and counsel colleagues; too late to establish guidelines for assisting with the funeral arrangements.<sup>144</sup>

Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) was created in 1984 to serve as a national networking organization to provide peer support to police survivors and assist law enforcement agencies with developing workable plans for handling survivors during the trauma affiliated with the sudden, often violent, loss of a loved one in the line of duty.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> John M. Violanti, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor Responses and Departmental Policies Study II: 1997* (Camdenton, MO: Concerns of Police Survivors, 1997), 1.

<sup>145</sup> Suzanne F. Sawyer, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death* (Camdenton, MO: Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc., 2012), 1.

As an organization that has spent over 30 years working toward helping prepare for line of duty deaths, COPS has become an essential asset to law enforcement agencies and survivor family members of line of duty deaths across the nation.

In 1997, COPS conducted part two of a 10-year study on the effects of line of duty deaths on survivors and law enforcement agencies. The first study was performed in 1987 by COPS Research Director Dr. Frances Stillman and one of her findings was that most law enforcement agencies did not have policies in place for line of duty deaths.<sup>146</sup> The study also revealed that most law enforcement agencies did not have available adequate information about employee demographics to make proper notifications to the next-of-kin when a line of duty death took place. The research was completed by the United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. The research in brief document stated that 67percent of law enforcement agencies were lacking formal line of duty death policies.<sup>147</sup> The research involved surveying the surviving family members to determine how their treatment and support was following the line of duty death. The study found that the family left behind typically felt “totally abandoned” by the department.<sup>148</sup> This feeling of abandonment started in the days following the wake and funeral.<sup>149</sup>

According to COPS, fear and insensitivity by the department’s administration are the two reasons behind this feeling of abandonment.<sup>150</sup> The 1987 study further showed that the level of distress felt by survivors was associated with the manner in which the department responded to the tragedy.<sup>151</sup> Ten years later, research in the follow-up study by Dr. John Violanti, COPS Research Coordinator, revealed only a slight increase from 33 to 39

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<sup>146</sup> Frances Stillman, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor and Departmental Responses* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 1987).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>148</sup> Sawyer, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*, 1.

<sup>149</sup> Violanti, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor Responses*.

<sup>150</sup> Sawyer, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*, 1.

<sup>151</sup> Stillman, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor and Departmental Responses*, 2.

percent of law enforcement agencies had put formal line of duty death policies in place; 20 percent reported that their formal policy was the result of a line of duty death experience.<sup>152</sup> The death of an officer has been reported by 90 percent of departments to have an emotional impact resulting in trauma, which led to 25 percent of those departments initiating psychological treatment for the officers most impacted.<sup>153</sup> Based on this study, one or more of the following actions took place at some law enforcement agencies after a line of duty death:

- Operational procedure changes
- Family notification procedure changes
- Recognition of the need for additional officers

In 1993, Concerns of Police Survivors produced a handbook, which is accessible to law enforcement agencies across the United States, entitled, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*. The handbook states that COPS believes it is the responsibility of each law enforcement agency to provide liaison support to the immediate survivors of an officer who dies in the line of duty.<sup>154</sup> The manual further specifies that tangible as well as intangible emotional support is needed to assist all survivors coping with the aftermath of a line of duty death.<sup>155</sup> Tangible emotional support means having peers, chaplains or other resources available to show concern and assist with the grieving process. Examples can range from wiping the tears of a grieving child to assisting a spouse with difficult funeral decisions or consoling distraught parents as they share memories of their lost loved one. Intangible emotional support can come in the form of taking care of responsibilities and relieving those grieving from tasks that can cause stress. Examples of these can be mowing the lawn, running errands, driving children to events, or just providing the survivor with alone time to allow grieving. The manual includes definitions, sections detailing

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<sup>152</sup> Violanti, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor Responses*, 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>154</sup> Sawyer, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*, 3.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 3.

how various aspects should be handled, a summary, acknowledgements, and an appendix that includes details on benefits.

The manual also shares some of the same details highlighted in Chapters III and IV from the policies of other law enforcement agencies and fire departments. The manual identifies specific terminology to be used and not to be used and gives chilling examples of why. Some of the other recommendations emphasized in the notification section include: notifications should always be made by at least two people and should not wait to assemble the desired personnel, to provide as many details as possible, and not to give false hope. The manual also stresses that the presence of a high-ranking official within the agency is a critical part of the notification. The absence of such an official can be interpreted as poor leadership and insensitivity.<sup>156</sup> In addition, the COPS manual also stresses the significance of including the parents when making notifications. Often, when an LODD occurs, the agency's focus is on the spouse and children's feelings of loss and grief, yet the loss that the parents and siblings feel go unnoticed.

One final point of the manual states, "until everyone sees the need to 'prepare' for death, we must prepare ourselves to handle the surviving families as compassionately as possible."<sup>157</sup> The manual that COPS makes available to law enforcement agencies is an important segment of what it provides; however, the organization offers a great deal more. The Concerns of Police Survivors website is a very inclusive compilation of tools and resources to help agencies prepare for line of duty deaths. With the plethora of information available and offer of assistance from COPS, agencies are irresponsible and ill prepared if they choose not to take advantage of these services.

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 11.



COPS offers the following complimentary documents to assist agencies:

- *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*, a 16-page public safety agency handbook
- Samples of general orders dealing with line-of-duty death
- Research in brief, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor and Departmental Responses*
- *Better Not Bitter*, 113-page paperback telling the story of Concerns of Police Survivors
- *Helpful Grief Material:*
  - Female grief
  - Male grief
  - Family grief
  - Child grief
  - Co-Worker grief
- Benefits available to surviving families of line-of-duty death in my state
- C.O.P.S. informational brochure
- Regular mailings of updates

## **B. EAP: CHAPLAINS AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS**

While Concerns of Police Survivors is a law enforcement and first responder specific program, there are other resources available to the general public. Many employers use employee assistance programs (EAPs), chaplains, and peer to peer counseling programs. Employee assistance programs have become more encompassing and have made extensive strides over the past several decades. Many employers recognize the need to evolve with the changes that have taken place in the workforce. For law enforcement agencies, the need for an effective EAP is paramount for the well-being of employees and the safety of citizens. As alcohol has become part of American life, it also become an issue in the workplace as early as the late 1700s. This has led to workplace safety concerns and the creation of employee assistance

programs.<sup>158</sup> One of the major areas where employee assistance programs have evolved has been from the sole focus on alcoholic employees needing assistance to “an ever-widening scope of employee problems and needs”<sup>159</sup> This change in the scope of EAP has led to various resources becoming available to provide employees with options for wellness and law enforcement agencies are no exception. It was in the 1950s that “police departments began implementing similar programs, again primarily addressing alcohol abuse.”<sup>160</sup> In the article, “Behind the Badge: Implications for Employee Assistance Programs in Law Enforcement,” they authors state, “it is the law enforcement agencies’ responsibility to look at alternative human resource programs to assist officers and their families with the stress brought on by the impact of policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>161</sup>

## **1. Chaplain Programs**

Chaplain programs have been in existence for centuries, beginning in 1775 with the Continental Army.<sup>162</sup> They are a common component of employee assistance programs among law enforcement agencies and fire departments. One of the ways the importance of chaplains is shown is through the American Police Chaplains Association (APCA). This association began in 2007 with a very simple mission: “adding value to law enforcement” and “to expand chaplaincy

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<sup>158</sup> William White, and David Sharar, *The Evolution of Employee Assistance: A Brief History and Trend Analysis* (Punta Gorda, FL: Chestnut Health Systems, 2002), <http://www.williamwhitepapers.com/pr/2003EAPhistorytrendsEAPDigest.pdf>.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Jocelyn E. Roland, “Developing and Maintaining Successful Peer Support Programs in Law Enforcement Organizations,” in *Handbook of Police Psychology*, ed. Jack Kitaeff (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 510.

<sup>161</sup> Lynn Atkinson-Tovar, and Kathleen Kiernan, “Behind the Badge: Implications for Employee Assistance Programs in Law Enforcement,” in *Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Conference Proceedings: Human Resource Management Issues. Symposium 22* (Tulsa, OK: Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001), 11.

<sup>162</sup> “History of the Chaplain Corps,” U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, accessed October 18, 2015, [http://chapnet.chaplaincorps.net/?page\\_id=658](http://chapnet.chaplaincorps.net/?page_id=658).

ministries to all law enforcement officers across America.”<sup>163</sup> It was founded by a chaplain of 34 years, who was previously a law enforcement officer. The APCA is one of the organizations that offers specific training to law enforcement chaplains.<sup>164</sup>

Another way the value and importance of police chaplains is shown is through the Police Chaplain Program. The Police Chaplain Program offers training to chaplains of law enforcement agencies to broaden the understanding of the law enforcement culture. Its mission is to “establish chaplain programs in police departments, sheriff departments, law enforcement agencies, fire departments and EMS.”<sup>165</sup>

The St. Petersburg Police Department has a chaplain program that is still under organization. Of the five law enforcement agencies analyzed for this thesis, three mention the use of a chaplain program as part of their policies and procedures, and two do not specifically refer to chaplain programs; however, they both mention peer support programs. Several other law enforcement agencies chaplain programs were reviewed, varying in size and scope, depending on the needs of the agency. All of the fire departments analyzed mentioned the use of chaplains. Concerns of Police Survivors recognizes and emphasizes the value of the use of chaplains in the aftermath of line of duty deaths. Chaplains are a helpful and practical resource that respond to line of duty deaths, specifically in the notification process, assistance during the funeral planning, and aftercare for survivors.

Chaplain involvement often begins with the notification procedures. When teams are formed to make the notification to the surviving family members, often the department or agency chaplain is included. The chaplain’s involvement with

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<sup>163</sup> “Mission and Values,” American Police Chaplains Association, accessed October 18, 2015, <http://americanpolicechaplain.org/index.php?page=mission-and-values>.

<sup>164</sup> “Our History,” American Police Chaplains Association, accessed October 18, 2015, <http://americanpolicechaplain.org/>.

<sup>165</sup> “Mission Statement,” The Police Chaplain Program, accessed October 18, 2015, <http://www.the-police-chaplain-program.org/mission-statement/index.html>.

the family of the deceased is often dictated by the desires of the family. In addition, the chaplain can be the primary contact regarding many of the memorial details, can facilitate the entire funeral service or he or she can be the provider of support for the family members of the fallen officer, as well as for the employees of the department. Although the St. Petersburg Police Department recently started a formalized chaplain program, the following Florida law enforcement agencies have line of duty death policies that specify the use of the chaplain, beginning with the notification process: Clearwater Police Department, Delray Beach Police Department, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, and Orange County Sheriff's Office.

Of the five law enforcement agencies analyzed, the Virginia State Police Chaplain Program is one of the longest running, which has been in existence for 38 years. Established in 1977, its Police Chaplain Program is considered a vital resource and has provided great benefit to many employees and their families.<sup>166</sup> According to the VSP, the "program provides support, guidance, and encouragement to those individuals or groups who may benefit from the chaplain's ministerial and counseling assistance."<sup>167</sup> The Virginia State Police recognizes the importance of individual stability for those sworn to protect and serve. There are currently 20 sworn employees serving as chaplains for the Virginia State Police.<sup>168</sup>

Another resource that Virginia State Police has available that works with the chaplain program is the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program. The program was established to provide a resource of coping techniques to reduce the negative effects that critical incidents can have on employees. There are currently 60 members of the CISM team and their mission is to "provide confidential assistance to employees, their families, or their

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<sup>166</sup> Virginia State Police, *Virginia State Police Facts and Figures Report 2014*, 26.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

significant others in coping with reactions to critical incidents in a healthy and positive manner.”<sup>169</sup>

## **2. Peer to Peer Counseling**

The police organizational culture has historically been skeptical of the value and merit of psychological services. Mental health professionals are often viewed as unfamiliar with the rigors of the job, seen as tools of management or the brass, and are associated with the stigma of mental illness, not mental health. These fears and perpetual false beliefs lead to distrust and suspicion of the mental health professional.<sup>170</sup>

According to Wasilewski and Olson, “There are still cops who know they should be getting help but refuse because of misperceptions they hold, and outright falsehoods they’ve been told, regarding confidentiality.”<sup>171</sup> This is one of the compelling arguments for the success of peer to peer counseling, specifically in the profession of law enforcement. In 1981, the Los Angeles Police Department began its Peer Counseling Program, and by 2001 it had grown to 230 members.<sup>172</sup> Reese explains, “In 1986, the major police departments in the United States had some form of a stress unit, or some other means of helping officers cope with personal and occupational problems....”<sup>173</sup> Formal peer counselor training and peer to peer counseling has been a part of law enforcement for decades.

The Department of Defense has conducted research to determine the effectiveness of peer support. Some of the research focused on two peer support programs that “targeted leadership support to create a culture where seeking the

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Roland, “Developing and Maintaining Successful Peer Support, 510.

<sup>171</sup> Wasilewski, and Olson, “Police Employee Assistance Programs,”

<sup>172</sup> Roland, “Developing and Maintaining Successful Peer Support, 509.

<sup>173</sup> James T. Reese, “A History of Police Psychological Services,” in *Police Psychology into the 21st Century*, eds. Martin I. Kurke, and Ellen M. Scrivner (31–44), (New York: Psychology Press, 1995), 35.

assistance of peer supporters is accepted and encouraged.”<sup>174</sup> One of the groups analyzed by the Department of Defense was Police Organization Providing Peer Assistance (POPPA). It is an organization that was started in 1996 after the New York City Police Department (NYPD) experienced 26 officer suicides in two years.<sup>175</sup> The premise and purpose of POPPA was to provide confidential counseling services to New York City police officers 24-hours-a-day. The unique characteristic of POPPA is that it established a level of confidence and trust that makes officers feel comfortable requesting its services. This trust was established because POPPA was affiliated with the NYPD but operated independently.<sup>176</sup> POPPA is staffed with officers who volunteer to serve as peer support officers. They are trained and available to meet with officers either the same day or the day after they are contacted for assistance.<sup>177</sup>

Often law enforcement officers see “themselves as problem solvers, not as people with problems,” which has led to the stigma associated with needing help.<sup>178</sup> Through this research, it was determined that POPPA has made advances in making law enforcement officers feel more at ease with requesting assistance. The organizations website notes, “According to the POPPA Organization, seeking support and averting a crisis is a sign of strength, not weakness.”<sup>179</sup> The Department of Defense research also revealed that many are “more comfortable sharing their struggles with a peer than with a mental health counselor”<sup>180</sup> This increases the effectiveness of peer to peer counseling, which

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<sup>174</sup> “DoD Examines Peer-to-Peer Support Programs to Assist Struggling Servicemembers,” *US Medicine: The Voice of Federal Medicine* (March 2011), <http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/departments-of-defense-dod/dod-examines-peer-to-peer-support-programs-to-assist-struggling-servicemembers/>.

<sup>175</sup> Police Organization Providing Peer Assistance, “POPPA: About Us,” POPPA Inc., accessed October 18, 2015, <http://www.poppanewyork.org/aboutus/history.cfm.40.html>.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> “DoD Examines Peer-to-Peer Support Programs to Assist Struggling Servicemembers,”

has increased the amount of related formal training that many law enforcement agencies are offering.

Of the five law enforcement agencies analyzed, the California Highway Patrol has the most extensive Peer Support Program (PSP). As part of the Highway Patrol manual, there is a 10-page section outlining the program. The manual explains, “The purpose of the PSP is to prevent and/or lessen the potential negative emotional or physical impact a critical incident or unsafe practice can have on a departmental employee and their family by providing emotional support, information, guidance, and assistance.”<sup>181</sup> Qualifying as a peer counselor requires that the employee has experienced at least one critical incident, be trained as a peer counselor, and be interviewed. If selected, she or he will receive 32 hours of training followed by 24 hours of yearly continuing education training.<sup>182</sup> Confidentiality is addressed and emphasized as a strict part of the program. It is further specified that a PSP volunteer is not permitted or obligated to share information learned by acting as a peer and further that one cannot be considered insubordinate for not sharing information, unless there is a criminal investigation.<sup>183</sup> The CHP currently has 120 peer counselors, and by the end of 2015, it will have 250. The program is very structured and has clearly defined roles and responsibilities. An important aspect of the PSP is that employees do not need permission to request services or supervisory approval.

Although not analyzed in Chapter III, Stockton (California) Police Department (SPD) has a noteworthy Peer Support Counseling Program that has been in effect since 2005.<sup>184</sup> The purpose of the program is to assist employees facing critical incident and reduce “the likelihood or effects of post-trauma stress reactions, and to provide support and assistance to employees and their families

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<sup>181</sup> California Highway Patrol, “Chapter 2: Peer Support Program,” in *California Highway Patrol Manual (HPM10.5): Employee Assistance Manual* (Sacramento, CA: California Highway Patrol, 2007), 2–3.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 2-3, 2-8.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 2-3, 2-4.

<sup>184</sup> St. Petersburg Police Department, *St. Petersburg Police Department General Order*, 1.

in handling personal problems.”<sup>185</sup> Once selected, members will receive 24 hours of training followed by annual refresher training.<sup>186</sup> Confidentiality, along with trust and anonymity, are listed as the most vital elements of peer to peer counseling.<sup>187</sup> With the hesitance of many to reach out for assistance, SPD emphasizes confidentiality and breaching this is grounds for dismissal as a peer counselor. A unique aspect of the SPD program is the annual program evaluation. The program coordinator is responsible for compiling a report that includes the analysis of the effect of the program, along with statistical data.<sup>188</sup> This report can show the validity of the program, as well as areas where changes or improvements are necessary.

### **3. Retreats**

Retreats are another tool that first responders can use to cope with the many stressors of such an emotionally demanding career. A retreat is a time when the everyday activities of life are put aside and focus on well-being and healing is the priority. The purpose is to heal and also to revitalize and learn from the experiences of life. Retreats can offer spiritual guidance, mental, and emotional stimulation and direction for improved physical health.

The California Highway Patrol participates in the West Coast Post-trauma Retreat (WCPR). The WCPR is a unique program in Northern California that allows first responders an opportunity to consult with licensed clinicians, mental health specialists, chaplains, peers, and family members of emergency responders.<sup>189</sup> In 1999, a few first responders, clinicians, and a chaplain met to discuss ways to assist first responders deal with traumatic incidents. They modeled the program after the On-Site Academy in Massachusetts, which is a

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>189</sup> “The West Coast Post-Trauma Retreat (WCPR),” First Responder Support Network, accessed October 27, 2015, <http://www.frsn.org/retreats/wcpr>.



residential first responder trauma program that has been in existence since the early 1990s and held the first WCPR in 2001.<sup>190</sup> The retreat is “a six day residential for emergency responders suffering from severe critical incident stress.”<sup>191</sup> A line of duty death, combined with the many facets of law enforcement, is often a critical incident and can cause emotional distress. The WCPR offers on average a retreat every three weeks and is endorsed by the California Police Chiefs Association and the International Conference of Police Chaplains.<sup>192</sup>

In Tampa, Florida, there is Operation Restore, which is a First Responder Post Trauma Training Retreat that began in 2014. This is a four-day residential program that focuses on first responders connecting with other first responders who have faced the same stream of critical incidents.<sup>193</sup> Similar to the WCPR, Operation Restore has certified police chaplains, licensed clinicians, and mental health specialists participating in steps to heal and improve the lives of first responders who have experienced trauma. The author was able to participate in Operation Restore while conducting research. The tools presented gave the author skills to cope with the co-worker deaths detailed in Chapter II.

### **C. SUMMARY**

The many components of line of duty deaths are precisely why there is a need to be prepared for these tragedies. The numerous resources available do not prevent line of duty deaths; however, they aid in the resiliency needed by law enforcement agencies across the United States. COPS provides a wealth of resources, chaplain programs provide the spiritual support needed in times of crisis or self-doubt, peer support groups provide a level of camaraderie and

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<sup>190</sup> “What Does the On-Site Academy Do?” On-Site Academy, accessed October 27, 2015, [http://www.onsiteacademy.org/On-Site\\_Academy/Home.html](http://www.onsiteacademy.org/On-Site_Academy/Home.html).

<sup>191</sup> “The West Coast Post-Trauma Retreat (WCPR),” First Responder Support Network.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> “The New ‘Operation Restore’ First Responders Post Trauma Training,” *Badge of Life: Police Mental Health Quarterly Newsletter* (January 2015), [http://www.franciscancentertampa.org/documents/BadgeofLifeJANUARY\\_NEWSLETTER.pdf](http://www.franciscancentertampa.org/documents/BadgeofLifeJANUARY_NEWSLETTER.pdf), 3.

understanding of the intense realities faced by law enforcement officers, and retreats provide a combination of resources and skills to enhance resiliency. Individual growth and social support multiplied with a comprehensive policy and network of resources is the foundation for a resilient agency after a line of duty death. In the following chapter, the findings and analysis of the research are documented and explained.

## **VI. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

Line of duty deaths have taken place in law enforcement for centuries, and there is no evidence that we can completely prevent them. Because an agency can be faced with a line of duty death, there is a need to build resiliency. The research conducted by Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) found that in 20 percent of cases, agencies implemented their LODD policy after experiencing a line of duty death.<sup>194</sup> While this is not the ideal situation, experiencing an LODD does show agencies why a policy is needed. If the death of an officer pushes a department into creating a policy, it demonstrates growth and the ability to learn from the mistake of not being prepared. Below are the findings and analyses of each section in this thesis.

### **A. ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The St. Petersburg Police Department has had 15 line of duty deaths since it was established 112 years ago. Experiencing a line of duty death can cause distress and lasting emotional effects for many. The related conclusions of this research follow.

#### **1. Finding**

The St. Petersburg Police Department (SPPD) does not currently have a line of duty death policy, which is one of the reasons this research is necessary and valuable.

#### **2. Analysis**

It has been almost five years since the St. Petersburg Police Department experienced three line of duty deaths within 28 days. When this occurred, the SPPD was inadequately equipped to handle the situation, and the department is still paying for this lack of preparedness. From the disjointed notification process,

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<sup>194</sup> Violanti, *Line-of-Duty Deaths: Survivor Responses*, 2.

to the inefficient funeral planning, and throughout the nonexistent aftercare, the lack of preparedness left many questions unanswered and much to be accomplished. With an agency of 562 sworn law enforcement officers and so many resources available, it is irresponsible for the agency to be ill prepared. The continued lack of preparedness to deal adequately with line of duty deaths is disheartening and disrespectful to the fallen and to their families. In the current age of technology, information and resources are so readily accessible that creating and implementing a policy can be done with minimal effort.

## **B. POLICE LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICIES**

Reviewing the line of duty death policies of the five agencies stresses the importance of having a policy in place prior to such an occurrence. Although agencies differ in size and need, many policies share core concepts.

### **1. Finding**

Of the five law enforcement agencies analyzed in Chapter III, every agency that has experienced a line of duty death has a policy. The policies vary in depth and scope; however, they each address certain aspects of line of duty deaths. The law enforcement agency policies analyzed and the information from COPS have a great many similarities; the primary one is the necessity of being proactive by having a written policy that establishes consistency by documenting expectations and requirements. Some of the similarities in policies include:

- Definition of line of duty death
- Availability of current emergency contact information
- Notification process and specific guidelines
- Funeral planning and logistics
- Need for emotional support through various avenues
- Assistance with legal matters and death benefits
- Aftercare for survivors

## **2. Analysis**

After reviewing the policies of various law enforcement agencies, it is evident that a line of duty death policy is needed at the St. Petersburg Police Department. The similarities and items emphasized in the policies evaluated make it easier to define what areas of focus should be included in a policy.

### **C. FIRE LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICIES**

Similar to law enforcement officers, firefighters also experience line of duty deaths. The line of duty death policies of three large fire departments were analyzed, and the related conclusions of this research follow.

#### **1. Finding**

Each of these fire departments experienced line of duty deaths and also has a related written policy. Comparable to the law enforcement agency policies analyzed in Chapter III, the fire department policies examined also noted the following common concerns: timeliness, accurate employee contact information, and emotional care.

#### **2. Analysis**

One of the main priorities and similarities of the fire department policies is timeliness. In all of the policies examined, the importance of timeliness is stressed, from the next of kin notification to the planning of memorial services. The fire department policies also stress the criticality of having accurate contact information for employees and having a sensitive plan for notifying next of kin. The policies also affirm the significance of emotional care for the family and the coworkers of the fallen firefighter. Other areas covered in the fire department policies include defining classification of employment status, logistics, and the impact that social media on disseminated information.

#### **D. DEALING WITH LINE OF DUTY DEATHS LEAD TO BETTER POLICY**

Losing an officer to a line of duty death is tragic. Having the framework in place for handling these incidents has shown to be the catalyst for resiliency.

##### **1. Finding**

Agencies that have experienced a line of duty death are not always prepared to handle such an event. However, it is this tragedy that sometimes motivates those involved to institute policies. The conscious decision to become prepared is the driving force that provides the correct mindset to create these policies.

##### **2. Analysis**

The research found that Norman Police Department, an agency that had experienced three line of duty deaths in 96 years of existence, has a line of duty policy in place. Yet the St. Petersburg Police Department, which has experienced five times as many line of duty deaths as the Norman Police Department, does not have one. This leads us to question seriously the idea that agencies with less LODDs experience would not be as prepared as agencies that had experienced more LODDs.

#### **E. COUPLING LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICY WITH SURVIVOR CARE RESOURCES**

Survivor care has not always been a focus of law enforcement agencies. Survivors include the family, friends and co-workers of the fallen officer. The related conclusions of this research follow.

##### **1. Finding**

Existing LODD policies of law enforcement agencies and fire departments, combined with other available resources, present ample information to create a feasible policy for agencies desiring to be proactive. In addition, Concerns of

Police Survivors provides law enforcement agencies the ability to use their resources and expertise to institute a viable and effective policy.

## **2. Analysis**

Tragedy leads to change. Being proactive and preparing for line of duty death is not the norm, however, being reactive is commonplace. Change is frequently sparked following an unfortunate incident. For instance, operational changes, notification procedure changes, and increases in staffing can take place. While the primary purpose of policy implementation is not to decrease line of duty deaths, enhanced procedures and increased staffing levels allow officers to become safer and more efficient.

## **F. CONNECTING LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICY WITH EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Employee assistance programs (EAP) can be helpful to survivors and department personnel to improve resiliency. Coping with line of duty deaths can cause emotional distress for many individuals. The related conclusions of this research follow.

### **1. Finding**

Another available resource found to be helpful is employee assistance programs. These programs house a variety of tools, including chaplain programs, peer counseling, and retreat information. The law enforcement agencies and fire departments evaluate use chaplains to assist in the grief process early on.

### **2. Analysis**

An EAP can be greatly beneficial to individuals and to the agency as a whole. It provides individuals with a confidential spiritual advisor to provide relief and coping skills to manage unexpected grief. Peer counseling is another tool used by the agencies analyzed that allows law enforcement officers a different avenue of confidential sharing with someone who understands the unique characteristics of law enforcement. Retreats are another valuable service that

agencies are using to provide holistic treatment to their employees. This holistic approach enhances the ability for employees to deal with many stressful aspects of law enforcement.

## **G. FOLLOW THROUGH AFTER THE INCIDENT**

The uniqueness of line of duty death affirms the reality that those providing assistance need to be properly trained to provide adequate tools and resources to help with the healing process. The COPS organization has researched a great deal of issues pertaining to LODD and has established follow through procedures to help agencies plan for this.

### **1. Finding**

The focus of departments on spouse survivors is often so great that other family members feel neglected or abandoned. Although there is often a great deal of attention given to the spouse by the department immediately following the death of an officer; however, this is short-lived and then the surviving spouse often feels detached from the department and forgotten about.

### **2. Analysis**

The possibility of leaving home for work and not returning at the end of the day is the harsh reality faced when entering the profession of law enforcement. While this thought is unpleasant, that does not change the undeniable fact that law enforcement officers will die in the line of duty. It is incumbent on the leaders of law enforcement agencies to prepare for such untimely tragedies proactively. This research has proven there are law enforcement agencies with effective written policies to assist their members in coping with line of duty deaths. Resiliency begins when there is a plan in place for the unforeseen circumstances. Chapter VII presents the thesis conclusions and recommendations for line of duty death policies based on the findings and analysis of the research.



## **VII. CONSTRUCTING LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICIES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

The focus of this thesis is to assess and rate line of duty death policies that can provide guidance to navigate agencies through the difficult challenge of line of duty deaths. Then, LODD policy attributes can be identified and used to create viable policies for middle-sized law enforcement agencies. After determining which line of duty death policies are effective, a LODD policy can be constructed for the St. Petersburg Police Department and other mid-size law enforcement agencies. The following are conclusions that are derived from this thesis research. After those, recommendations are offered for constructing, staffing, and implementing LODD policies. These recommendations are applicable to police, fire, and other first responder agencies.

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

A comprehensive examination of law enforcement agencies and fire departments reveals various ways policies can be written to be effective. This thesis also includes research on other available resources to assist law enforcement agencies with LODDs. The findings show that having a written line of duty death policy is the number one key to resiliency for law enforcement agencies. This resiliency encompasses benefits that will be realized by department employees, family members of the fallen officer, as well as the community as a whole. The following conclusions have been proven by this research.

#### **1. There is a Lack of Foresight and Preparation**

Most agencies are not prepared for line of duty deaths. Furthermore, as this research has shown, many agencies have buried their collective heads in the sand and do not accept that unfortunate incidents are going to occur, and therefore they do not have a plan of action ready. The choice to be reactive and not proactive regarding line of duty deaths has caused many agencies

unnecessary strife and many families added pain in an already difficult situation. The research completed by COPS reveals that less than 40 percent of law enforcement agencies have LODD policies. The author has knowledge that after the two St. Petersburg police officers were killed on January 24, 2011, the administration was approached about implementing a line of duty death policy. However, on February 21, 2011, another St. Petersburg police officer was killed, and there was no policy in the works. To this date, the administration has yet to move forward on its decision to implement a LODD policy.

## **2. Experience and Awareness Yields Readiness for Untoward Events**

Agencies that have experienced LODDs have a good handle on how to manage events afterward. The agency with the greatest amount of experience in line of duty deaths analyzed in this thesis is the California Highway Patrol. Having experienced 225 line of duty deaths in 85 years has made the agency recognize how vital it is to be prepared. On the other hand, Norman Police Department (NPD) does not have a great deal of experience, having experienced three line of duty deaths in 96 years; even so, it has the awareness of how crucial line of duty death policies are and have effective policies in place. In fact, COPS recognizes the NPD policy as a model line of duty death policy. Norman Police Department shows that experiencing numerous line of duty deaths is not a determining factor in having an effective policy.

## **3. Survivors and Families Must Be Accommodated**

Unless there is a dedicated effort made to create policies, survivors will suffer more than necessary. The author witnessed this first hand when the St. Petersburg Police Department lost two of its officers in January 2011. The memorial became a media spectacle and the focus shifted from the families healing to the department's public image as the nation watched its every move. The families and their feelings were put on the back burner and the local and national media focused on the loss the department experienced. When an SPPD

grieving widow as unable to control her emotions days after her husband was killed, the department members began making decisions for her, including her role at the memorial service. In this research, several agency policies stressed the importance of the family wishes taking precedence over that of the agency. The Long Beach Fire Department policy states that if necessary, the department will hold its own memorial service separate from the family, if that is the family's wish.

#### **4. Law Enforcement Officer Recovery is Needed**

Employee assistance programs have been in existence for more than 300 years, which brings attention to the importance of overall well-being. The Virginia State Police had a higher success rate of healing because of its chaplain program, which has been in existence for over 35 years. As stated in Chapter V of this thesis, VSP's chaplain program currently has 20 sworn employees serving as chaplains and consider this guidance and encouragement a vital asset to the healing process. During the course of this research, the author had the opportunity to attend Operation Restore, a four-day residential retreat to evoke the healing process for first responders. The program focused on a holistic approach towards resiliency. There was emphasis on the grief process, physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. The overwhelming theme in all of these programs is the significance of peer support. EAP, chaplains, and the retreats all stress the invaluable resource of confidential healing through conversations with peers who have also experienced similar traumatic incidents.

#### **5. Availability of Accurate Next of Kin Information is Critical**

The Charlotte Fire Department recognizes the importance of obtaining and updating employee emergency contact information. When its plan was instituted, all employees had to complete documents providing current contact information for those they wanted to be notified in the event of their death. The department requires these documents be updated annually. Colorado Springs Fire Department has a more in-depth plan that begins upon employment. Employees

are required to provide not just emergency contact information, but also a designee to assist with injury or death notification and funeral planning. It should be noted that no law enforcement agency analyzed in this thesis followed these protocols.

## **6. Notifications Need to Be Completed Quickly and Properly**

One of the areas covered in each policy analyzed, which was often highlighted as extremely vital, is the notification process. Some of the policies had several paragraphs dedicated to notifications, while others had numerous pages. There are many personal accounts that explain why the level of detail for notifications is crucial. One powerful story documented in the COPS handbook regarding notifications is from a surviving spouse and the manner in which she learned of the death of her husband. The widow shares that she was notified in her car over the radio by a reporter. This left her sitting in her vehicle and sobbing blocks from her home until she was discovered by her neighbors.<sup>195</sup> This is one chilling example of how an improper notification can have an impact that worsens an already unfortunate situation.

As a law enforcement officer, making death notifications is part of assigned duties. The moment that someone is told, the devastating news stays with them. This explains why many of the policies include specific language that should and should not be used. As policies have emphasis using the proper language, they also emphasize the timeliness of notifications. Social media has played a role in the need for swift and proficient notifications as there are so many avenues for information to be disseminated; however, social media is by no means the proper way for someone to learn of the death of a loved one, friend, or coworker.

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<sup>195</sup> Sawyer, *Support Services to Surviving Families of Line-of-Duty Death*, 3.

## **7. Employee Wishes Must Be Documented**

Awareness of the desires of the fallen officer can create the tone for the planning process. After an LODD, there are several decisions that must be made in a short time span. Having advanced knowledge of what the fallen officer would prefer in the event of a line of duty death eliminates some of the unnecessary tension between those trying to guess what would be best. The tension and strife caused by trying to make decisions during these difficult times, in many instances, has ruined friendships and relationships between law enforcement agencies and the family of the fallen officer. Colorado Springs Fire Department recognizes this and places significance on it in its policy. Upon being hired, each employee is required to complete a nine-page document answering majority of the questions that arise after a line of duty death. These documents are readily accessible and are updated throughout the career of the firefighters. Having access to the wishes of a fallen officer reduces the amount of guesswork that occurs when decisions need to be made.

## **8. A Funeral Planning Committee Is Vital**

After a line of duty death, there is a great deal to accomplish in a short amount of time. Quite often, LODD funerals are attended by thousands of mourners and many local and state dignitaries. Preparation is the key to provide a respectful and honorable memorial service for the fallen officer, to ensure a smoothly run service, and to avoid last minute, uneducated decisions. A committee or group of specific individuals who are trained and kept abreast of what is required to plan a LODD funeral ease some of the difficulties of a tragic situation. Having a written plan and individuals assigned to complete needed functions will lead to a more efficiently run memorial service and eliminate the worry and frustration of logistics.

Consistency is key, and it is approached from different angles in the various policies analyzed. Some of the policies assign positions within the department to manage the various roles of the planning committee. In other

agency policies, the positions are assigned by the chief. The Long Beach Fire Department has established a system that includes having a pre-printed manual for each position. This provides structure and direction for those assigned to certain tasks, which streamlines the funeral planning process. The California Highway Patrol has a unit, the Office of Employee Safety and Assistance, with eight individuals assigned, and it has a substantial budget to assist with line of duty deaths. The Office of Employee Safety and Assistance contributes to the many aspects involved in line of duty death, including the extensive funeral planning process.

#### **9. Clearly Defined Parameters of Employee Eligibility**

Employees should clearly understand what is to take place in the event of a line of duty death. Some of the policies analyzed listed the different statuses of employment and what the department considers customary upon the death of an employee. For example, the Kansas City Police Department policy differentiates between active, retired, sworn, and non-sworn employees and clarifies specifically for what each category of employment is eligible. This establishes a basis for consistency, which promotes the level of professionalism at a law enforcement agency. Line of duty deaths are not something to be looked forward to, however, to see that the agency clearly defines what it is prepared to do for its employees and families should this occur provides a certain level of comfort and promotes a general sense of concern.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is highly recommended that the St. Petersburg Police Department implement a policy or policies to assist with the aftermath of a line of duty death. There are certain topics that are instrumental to a viable policy and are necessary to include in these recommendations. The following recommendations have been developed as a result of the conclusions derived from this thesis research.

### **1. Define Line of Duty Death**

The importance of defining line of duty death is to set standards for consistency. Construct a list of parameters that constitute a death to be titled a line of duty death by St. Petersburg Police Department standards. Some of the areas that should be addressed include an officer traveling to and from work, an officer taking police action while off-duty, and what (if anything) would exclude an officer death from being considered a line of duty death. An example of this would be an officer dying while in the commission of a felony. The details of this can affect the level of department participation and involvement after the death.

### **2. Define Job Classifications**

Characterize various statuses of employment such as sworn, non-sworn, retired, reserve, fulltime, or part-time. State what actions will be taken for each employment status. The significance of defining job classifications is to establish guidelines and have consistency for employees, retired employees, and their families.

### **3. Notifications**

Notification is one of the first things that takes place following a line of duty death. How the next of kin notifications are made sets the precedence and tone for the many events that are to come. Proper notifications are vital to providing a fallen officer with the respect she or he deserves and providing the family members with the compassion they need at this time and in the future. Designate who is responsible, under ideal circumstances, for making the notifications. Give guidelines regarding protocol for how to make the notification and identify preferred and acceptable language for use for a notification. The prevalent use of social media should be examined when considering the timeliness needed for making notifications.

#### **4. Employee Information**

Create a plan to acquire emergency contact information for all current employees and a plan of action to update the information going forward. One plan suggested in this research is to have all employees update their information by a certain date and then require that it be updated annually at a designated time. Options of when employee contact information can be updated are: upon the completion of annual employee evaluations, at annual firearms qualifications, upon the completion of the first shift bid of the year, or at the beginning of the fiscal year. Each of these options has pros and cons that should be considered. The manner in which this information is kept must also be considered. Whether it is electronic or hard copy, the accessibility of the information is paramount. In the event of a line of duty death, the information needs to be available to someone on duty to avoid a delay in the notification process. However, since the information is personal in nature, it must be guarded with precautions to protect privacy.

#### **5. Logistics**

Funeral planning can be difficult and requires a lot of attention to details. It can be especially challenging when an unexpected death is coupled with the involvement of the media, public figures, and thousands of attendees paying their respects. A logistical plan is vital so that in advance it is understood who is responsible for what and exactly what the requirements and expectations are. The logistics plan can be very in depth and should cover a wide range of information beginning with the assignment of responsibilities. Once the responsibilities are determined, the tasks and expectations should be defined. Creation of a planning checklist and timeline is extremely useful, and it should address details regarding:

- Pre-planning of the services
- Scheduling of services
- Memorial service timelines



- Order of service; procession and graveside details
- Religious protocol
- List of contacts/resources available to assist
- Guidelines for media participation
- Details regarding published and written documents
- Seating and VIP attendance

## **6. Survivor Support**

The survivor support is one of the final but most crucial sections of the policy. It is important because it establishes avenues for the survivors to reach needed resources. It is imperative that this policy emphasize the importance of survivor support from the very beginning and through the aftercare process that could potentially be years later. Survivor support has two sides that are very different, yet they encompass some of the same needs. The needs of the family survivors and the needs of the law enforcement family should both be addressed. Resources should be assigned and made available to assist with all parties. This policy should list the available EAP resources and reiterate the confidentiality of the use of the services. It would be advantageous to assign someone to help navigate the surviving beneficiary through completing required paperwork to obtain benefits as well as provide helpful resources to create future memorials, if desired. To avoid the feelings of abandonment by the law enforcement family that the employee's family after the funeral and initial events pass, long-term actions should be addressed. Some of the long-term actions for the family include making them aware of various events held to honor the fallen, both local and nationally, recognizing special days and following-up on needs they have expressed. The author further recommends the St. Petersburg Police Department start a peer to peer support group as part of the survivor support.

As the above conclusions and recommendations demonstrate, recognizing the requirement for a line of duty death policy at the St. Petersburg Police Department is the first step to preparedness and readiness. While it is desired that SPPD and all other law enforcement agencies never be faced with a

line of duty death, it is impractical to think a line of duty death will never occur. Law enforcement is a dangerous profession and as long as there is evil in the world, LODD is a reality.

This thesis has provided accounts of different agencies ranging from a law enforcement agency that has experienced three line of duty deaths to an agency that has experienced 225 deaths. The common thread is that each agency has a LODD policy. These policies do not prevent or reduce LODDs; however, they do offer direction in a time of need, a time that can be extremely stressful and difficult. It is the responsibility of agencies to provide their members with tools needed to be effective and resilient when faced with difficult times.

This thesis provides the St. Petersburg Police Department with the basis to recognize the need for a line of duty death policy, research to demonstrate the benefits of a policy, and conclusions and recommendations for what the author believes could present the greatest benefit.

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